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BIDDING AND PLAY
IN DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

by the same author



**CONTRACT BRIDGE COMPLETE—THE GOLD
BOOK OF BIDDING AND PLAY**

**CULBERTSON'S SUMMARY OF CONTRACT BRIDGE
CULBERTSON'S CONTRACT BRIDGE SELF-TEACHER**

CONTRACT BRIDGE FOR EVERYONE

CULBERTSON ON CANASTA

ELY CULBERTSON
★
Bidding and Play
in
DUPLICATE
Contract Bridge

edited by
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FABER AND FABER LIMITED
24 Russell Square
London

Faber and Faber Limited
24 Russell Square, London, W.C.1
Printed in Great Britain by
Latimer Trend & Co Ltd Plymouth

INTRODUCTION

Duplicate bridge will eventually become our national pastime; but, strangely enough, less than 2,000,000 of our 15,000,000 bridge players have participated in duplicate bridge games. The reason for this is that duplicate equipment, directions for playing the game, and a book to help people play duplicate bridge well, have never been made available to the general public.

The American Contract Bridge League conducts duplicate bridge tournaments throughout the country, but these have been for a limited number of people. From now on, the work of the League and its many branches must widen interest in duplicate. For example, every industrial plant in the country should find duplicate bridge a necessary part of its recreation programme. Nothing will bring management and labour in closer contact than an evening at duplicate bridge. When Mary Smith, the girl in the cafeteria, sets the superintendent three tricks at three no-trump, there will be no scurrying to appear busy on her part when he enters the cafeteria. They will greet each other with a smile, and she will probably say: 'Have you been bidding many no-trumps lately?'

There is another reason why duplicate bridge will become the nation's pastime. It can be played by young and old alike. Youth will always be introducing new elements into the game. Age will always have the advantage of years of experience. We may lose our health or limbs, but our minds remain keen and efficient. We all have a desire to remain in competition and tournament bridge gives us that opportunity regardless of age.

After World War I, bridge became immensely popular. Realizing the public's need of proper standardization of

INTRODUCTION

bidding and play, Ely Culbertson published many books on contract bridge. In association with bridge, Culbertson's name is known to everyone in the United States. It is logical that the leader of the millions who took up bridge after the last war should now provide the means for those same players to become duplicate-minded.

There are many differences between duplicate bridge and rubber bridge, as Culbertson brings out throughout this book. There are also many opportunities for good bids and plays which the rubber-bridge player never encounters. Culbertson has the proper background for explaining these bids and plays. He has been an outstandingly successful tournament player himself, and he has also sought the advice of other successful tournament players. With his experience as a bridge writer, he is without doubt the person best qualified to provide the general public with a book on duplicate.

WILLIAM E. MCKENNEY

Executive Secretary

American Contract Bridge League

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Hardly a decade ago duplicate bridge was the exclusive property of a handful of enthusiasts. Very few clubs could scare up enough players for even a monthly duplicate bridge game, and duplicate in the home was almost unknown. Today there is scarcely a town in the United States which does not have its regular duplicate bridge game and duplicate bridge in the home has become a commonplace. Almost any bridge player who develops more than an average interest in the science of the game turns sooner or later to duplicate, and once he has tried the game he usually becomes an addict.

Of course, I do not intend to take sides in any argument which may develop between the rubber-bridge and duplicate-bridge adherents; I count both games as my principal hobbies. The fact remains that at least two million people in the United States play duplicate bridge, and that this form of the game has achieved popularity almost as rapidly in Great Britain.

It is the serious bridge players who do most of the reading of the literature of the game, and these are the duplicate-bridge players. Yet, almost incredibly, duplicate bridge has scarcely any literature of its own. Compared with the thousands of volumes on regular contract bridge, there is one full-length book and a few pamphlets on duplicate bridge. There are also a few books on how to conduct a duplicate-bridge game—that is, how to act as a tournament director—but this is a subject in which the duplicate player is seldom interested. Therefore, what written advice he can get on duplicate-bridge bidding and play must be taken from books which were written primarily from the standpoint of rubber

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

bridge and which usually devote no more than a short and reluctant chapter to duplicate tactics.

In this book I have tried to repair that lack by giving a *comprehensive picture of the objectives and tactics of duplicate bridge*.

Realizing that most duplicate-bridge players are relatively advanced as compared to the average casual bridge player, I have written this book on the assumption that the reader already knows the fundamental principles of the game of bridge. Nevertheless, I have reviewed many basic points which are often neglected or misunderstood.

In addition, I have included a description of the mechanics of playing duplicate bridge, and advice for running simple games at home and in clubs, for those bridge players who are not yet experienced at duplicate but who wish to become so.

I wish, as always, to express my gratitude to Josephine Culbertson and Albert H. Morehead, both of whom are unexcelled as bridge players and analysts, and who are editors of all my books. On this difficult subject I have also drawn heavily for advice on Richard L. Frey, one of the greatest tournament players of all time and one of my favourite partners of other years. My principal associate, Alphonse Moyse, Jr., has also been an editor of this book and his advice and assistance have been invaluable. I wish to thank Charles H. Goren, Helen Sobel, Lee Hazen, Alfred P. Sheinwold and others for their advice on questionable points, and William E. McKenney for his introduction.

I am indebted for permission to reprint the laws of duplicate to Mr. McKenney, chairman, and the members of the National Laws Commission, and especially to Geoffrey Mott-Smith, secretary of that commission, who prepared the draft of those laws for publication in this book.

ELY CULBERTSON

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CHAPTER I

WHY DUPLICATE BRIDGE IS POPULAR

The original purpose of duplicate play was to settle arguments. Duplicate was first played in 1857, when contract bridge had never dreamed of and its ancestor, whist, was the big game.

Every human being who ever sat down at a bridge table thinks he is a better player than he actually is. There are no exceptions to this; none. The same was true in the days of whist. But every player has immemorially had difficulty in proving he is as good as he says or thinks he is. If he has a winning streak, others will say he is just lucky; if he has a losing streak, no one can be prevailed upon to believe it was all due to the terrible cards he held.

So, back in 1857, a man named Henry Jones, who later became famous as a whist authority under the name Cavendish, sought a way to prove relative superiority at the game. He pitted four recognized good players against four who were thought to be quite poor. Thirty-three hands were dealt and then duplicated with other packs of cards. The two foursomes sat and played, each side holding the same cards so there could be no luck of the deal. The good players won eleven tricks more in the thirty-three deals than did the poor players. That was considered sufficient proof that duplicate whist would demonstrate the superiority of the good player, and the game has been played from that time on, eventually becoming duplicate bridge.

To-day, an argument between two bridge players is much more likely to end at the rubber-bridge table than in a duplicate match. People have learned that skill predominates in

WHY DUPLICATE BRIDGE IS POPULAR

rubber bridge as much as it does in duplicate, and no one pays much attention to the loser crying about his bad cards. Yet duplicate has grown to its greatest popularity.

Advantages of Duplicate Bridge

What is the appeal of duplicate bridge?

For one thing, it is a peerless diversion. By playing in a duplicate game one has an evening's entertainment in the company of other people, and at less cost than many moving picture shows.

Another thing duplicate bridge does is to make possible the ranking of bridge players. In local, sectional and national tournaments sponsored by the American Contract Bridge League, people who are proud of their bridge skill can compete for championship titles and thus prove how good they are. At most six people can play in a rubber-bridge game (counting cut-ins), so a player may have his bridge accurately rated only by playing duplicate bridge in a tournament in which dozens or hundreds of other players may compete.

The up-and-coming player, who wants the enjoyment and experience of meeting the finest players in the world, finds his only opportunity to do so through duplicate bridge. Having attained a fair degree of proficiency, he can enter tournaments and sit at the same table with all the noted experts he has heard about. He could not do this otherwise without engaging in a rubber-bridge game in which he would probably be outclassed at the start at least, and in which the stakes would be high enough to make his education costly.

And, perhaps most important of all, duplicate bridge is the finest of all teachers. The casual bridge player does not always remember the hands he has played. In duplicate bridge he need not remember them; they are all preserved intact so that he may look at them and study them after he has played them. Thus he can draw conclusions as to what he might have done for greater profit, and when the same type of hand comes up again he will know better. A further advantage comes from the fact that in a duplicate game he can compare his methods

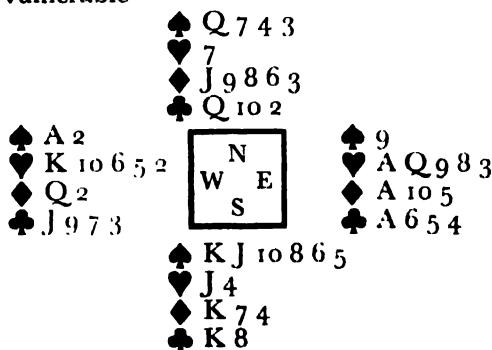
A PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION

with those of other players, and often of more experienced players, who held the same cards. This, too, is impossible in rubber bridge; no one else ever holds precisely the same hand in precisely the same circumstances. Moreover, when a player thinks about a hand after it has been played at rubber bridge, he may forget the position of vital cards. At duplicate there is no need to remember, since all the cards of every hand have been preserved.

A Practical Demonstration

The world is full of people of a purely pragmatic turn of mind, people who have difficulty absorbing theories but who can be both convinced and enlightened from seeing the actual effect of one method as against another. Duplicate games have taught some of these people things about bridge they would never have learned (or would never have believed) if they had played nothing but rubber bridge. The outstanding example, because it is the simplest, may be found in a hand like this:

East dealer
Neither side vulnerable



The bidding:

| EAST | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | 4 ♥ | ? |

There are thousands, even millions of bridge players who could never be persuaded to bid four spades on the North

WHY DUPLICATE BRIDGE IS POPULAR

hand in a rubber-bridge game. It is quite obvious that North-South would be likely to go down two tricks, whereas East-West will score only 120 points by making four hearts, since they are not vulnerable. To many players it appears that North will lose 300 if he bids four spades, and only 120 if he passes.

However desperately one might have argued with such players that by bidding four spades they could prevent East-West from scoring a game worth at least 300 points, in addition to the 120-point trick-score, the arguments are unavailing. Even some very respectable bridge players scoffed at sacrifice bidding, calling it 'flag-flying'. Being unable to understand the theory behind bidding, they refused to believe that certain contracts had an invisible value which, though not scored immediately, was nevertheless real.

But when these players learned to play duplicate bridge, the practical results of such questions were set squarely and emphatically before them. They learned that if they passed in such a situation and on such a hand, their East-West opponents would immediately get not only the 120-point trick-score but also the 'invisible' 300-point value of the non-vulnerable game, and that the East-West score would be 420 points. But, they would learn, if North did bid four spades and was doubled, East-West could get only 300 points. So the North player who passed over four hearts would find himself with a bad score in comparison to other North players who bid four spades.¹

This being the proof of the pudding, all our pragmatists promptly adopted the sacrifice bidding which they had previously dismissed so scornfully as flag-flying, and carried the

¹ The four spade bid by North might give him even more convincing proof of its efficacy if East decides to bid five hearts, which cannot be made against proper defence. Dummy will win the spade opening, and after drawing two rounds of trumps East will trump a spade to strip the hand. Then East will lead the ace of clubs and if South carelessly plays low on it, East will throw South in on the second club lead and make the contract, since South must lead a diamond or a spade. But if South is on his toes he will drop the club king under the ace and now East must lose his two clubs and a diamond. (East could camouflage his plan better by leading to the club ace at trick two, but South should still drop his king.)

CORRECTING BAD HABITS

same principle with them to the rubber-bridge table, to the vast improvement of their play.

Correcting Bad Habits

In addition to demonstrating in a practical way such aspects of bridge theory as this, duplicate play forces a player to look out for and to correct bad habits which pass unnoticed in a rubber-bridge game because they are so seldom costly there. It is often impossible to prove the superiority of one line of play over another in rubber bridge; in duplicate, if you play a hand one way and go down and all the others choose another line and make it, you will at least suspect that you may have overlooked something. An opportunity for a sound or even a brilliant play may go unnoticed at rubber bridge because, as it happens, only an extra trick and not the contract is at stake. In duplicate bridge, that overtrick will not be unimportant. By failing to get it (or to keep the opponents from getting it) you may get a poor score; finding that you have a poor score you will examine the cards to see what you did wrong; and out of this may come experience on which you can draw to your advantage in some future hand and at some more important contract, whether in duplicate or in rubber bridge.

For all these reasons, as well as because the game is fun, it pays to learn and to play duplicate bridge. To win at duplicate, however—and who does not want to win?—it is not enough to be an adequate rubber-bridge player. In many respects duplicate has its own technique, which differs from the technique of rubber bridge and must be understood before the duplicate player can hope to have a good match-point score. These points of duplicate technique will be dealt with in the succeeding chapters of this book.

CHAPTER II

THE MATCH-POINT DUPLICATE GAME

Most duplicate bridge games are contests for pairs. The winner is determined by the match-point scoring system. Other forms of duplicate play will be treated separately; for the time being only pair contests with match-point scoring will be considered.

While the mechanics of duplicate bridge is fairly well known to most players, there are several fundamentals of the game whose purposes and workings are not clearly understood even by many experienced players. Therefore it will be well to review these.

In a duplicate game, two pairs sit down at each table just as they would in a rubber-bridge game. On the table in front of them there are one or more duplicate boards, containing the bridge hands they will play in that round. Each duplicate board contains four pockets, one for each player, and each pocket holds the thirteen-card hand of the player nearest it. The players take their hands out of these pockets and bid as they would in an ordinary bridge game. Then the opening lead is made, the dummy is put down, and the cards are played; but instead of tossing them into the centre and gathering them up in tricks, each player merely shows the card he is leading or playing, and then turns it over on the table in front of him. This permits each hand to be returned to its pocket intact, so that players in future rounds will hold exactly the same cards. When the play is completed and the result is agreed upon, the score of that deal is recorded.

When two or three boards have been played, according to the terms of the game, the players change tables, meet other

SCORING THE DUPLICATE GAME

pairs, and play other boards. There are various systems for circulating the players and the boards from table to table, so that each pair will meet as many other pairs, and play as many different boards as possible.

The purpose of duplicate bridge is to compare the results of one pair with the results of other pairs who held precisely the same cards. The greater the number of these comparisons, the better test of skill the game will provide.

The true meaning of the word 'comparison' and the method of scoring must be clearly understood, for they best illustrate the basic objective of duplicate bridge.

Scoring the Duplicate Game

When the players at the tables set down their score for each board, they usually do so on a 'travelling score slip'.¹

When the score has been written down, the travelling score slip is folded and stuck in a pocket of the duplicate board. Thus it will travel from table to table with the board, and will eventually comprise a record of all the scores made by all the pairs who played that particular board.

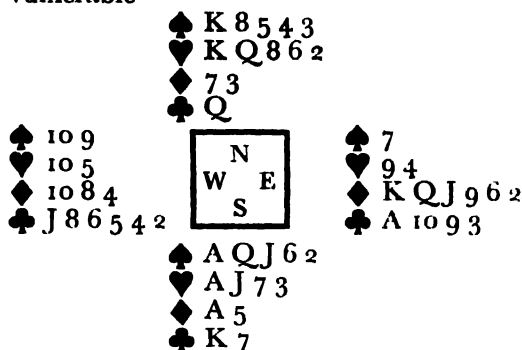
Each pair playing in the game is identified by a pair number, and on the travelling score slip is entered the number of the pair which held the North-South cards in the deal, the number of the pair which held the East-West cards in the deal, and a record of the score made.

Before examining the travelling score slip closely, consider the following deal. This deal occurred in a duplicate game in which there were sixteen pairs—eight tables. The deal was played eight times in all—once at each table, and once by each pair. Here are the cards:

¹ In all large tournaments, and in some informal duplicate games, the score of every hand is recorded on a separate slip, called a 'pick-up slip', which the tournament director collects and enters on a recapitulation sheet ('recap sheet') which will eventually show all the results of all the pairs in the game. The practical effect is exactly the same as when the travelling score slip is used.

THE MATCH-POINT DUPLICATE GAME

North-South vulnerable



Study of this deal reveals the fact that North-South have all the best of it in the cards they hold. North-South, at their best contract, can make a small slam—six spades. East-West must lose two tricks in hearts and one trick in each of the other suits, so at best they can make a contract of two-odd in one of the minors.

The deal will be played eight times. Eight different pairs will hold the North-South cards; eight other pairs will hold the East-West cards. It will be proper, then, to compare the results of all the East-West pairs who play the hand. If one North-South pair bids six spades and makes it, and another North-South pair stops at four spades and makes it with two overtricks, it is obvious that the former pair has obtained a better result from precisely the same cards, and that the former pair is entitled to a better rating on the board. Similarly, if one East-West pair permits its opponents to play at four spades and make a vulnerable game, whereas another East-West pair sacrifices by bidding five diamonds and goes down three tricks, not vulnerable, it is obvious that the latter pair has held its loss to a minimum and deserves a better score than the former pair.

Note that the play of this deal, and the play of any deal in duplicate bridge, produces two entirely different sets of comparisons. It would obviously be unfair to compare the score made by a North-South pair which holds good cards with the

ENTERING THE SCORE

score made by an East-West pair which on the same deal holds poor cards.

Entering the Score

Now observe the travelling score slip illustrated below. It records the results of the deal you have just examined.

| TRAVELLING SCORE <i>(Mitchell or Howell)</i> NORTH PLAYER <u>only</u> keeps score Enter Pair No. of E-W Pair Board No. <u>30</u> | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| N-S Pair | E-W Pair | FINAL CONTRACT PLAYED BY | NORTH-SOUTH | | E-W MATCH POINTS | N-S MATCH POINTS |
| | | | Net Plus | Net Minus | | |
| 1 | 16 | 6♥-North | | 100 | | 0 |
| 2 | | | | | 1 | |
| 3 | 15 | 6♠ South | 1430 | | | 7 |
| 4 | 7 | 4♥-North | 650 | | | 2 |
| 5 | | | | | 3½ | |
| 6 | 5 | 4♠-South | 680 | | | 3½ |
| 7 | | | | | 5 | |
| 8 | 13 | 3N.T. South | 690 | | | 5 |
| 9 | | | | | 3½ | |
| 10 | | | | | 6 | |
| 11 | 10 | 5♦dble. East | 500 | | | 1 |
| 12 | 2 | 6♦dble. East | 700 | | | 6 |
| 13 | | | | | 2 | |
| 14 | 9 | 4♠ South | 680 | | | 3½ |
| 15 | | | | | 0 | |
| 16 | | | | | 7 | |

THE MATCH-POINT DUPLICATE GAME

The top line says 'Travelling Score (Mitchell or Howell)'. The 'Mitchell' and 'Howell' movements are two different methods of conducting a duplicate pair tournament. They will be described in Chapter XIII. For the time being it is not necessary to consider them; the scoring is the same in both.

The next two lines indicate that the North player must keep the score and that he should remember to enter the pair number of the East-West pair against whom he has played. Every time the board is played, the result is entered on the line corresponding to the pair number of the North-South pair.

Thus, the line numbered 1 indicates that the North-South Pair 1 played against East-West Pair 16, and North bid six hearts. Six hearts is an inferior contract—it cannot be made against a diamond opening. Actually, North went down one. Being vulnerable, North lost 100 points to East-West; this means that North-South were minus 100 points on the deal, and East-West, reciprocally, had to be plus 100 points.

When Pair 3 held the North-South cards, against Pair 15 in the East-West positions, Pair 3 reached the best contract—six spades. This could be made because after drawing trumps South could discard his losing diamond on dummy's last heart, and limit his loss to a single club trick.¹ Therefore North-South made their slam, scoring 180 points for tricks, 500 for a vulnerable game, and 750 for the slam bonus. North-South were plus 1,430, which made East-West minus 1,430.

Continuing to study the travelling score slip, we find that Pair 4 and Pair 6 held the North-South cards in this deal. Both of them missed the slam; but Pair 4 played the hand in the inferior heart suit while Pair 6 bid their game in spades, whereupon Pair 4 made only 5-odd and Pair 6 made 6-odd, giving Pair 6 a better result than Pair 4.

¹ As between two possible trump suits of approximately the same general strength, it is better to select the one which is more evenly divided between the partnership hands. The other, unevenly divided, suit will then provide discards which the evenly divided suit would not.

‘MATCH-POINTING’

Differences in Scoring

When the hand has been bid and played, it is scored much the same as in rubber bridge. However, there are no rubbers. The duplicate board tells whether a side is vulnerable or not, and if a vulnerable pair bids and makes a game it scores 500 points in addition to its trick-score; if a non-vulnerable pair bids and makes a game, it scores 300 points in addition to its trick-score. Honours do not count at all, and bidding and making any contract of less than game—a part score—counts 50 points in addition to the trick-score. Everything else—slams, undertrick penalties, etc.—is the same as in rubber bridge.

The duplicate bridge scoring table is Law No. 49.

‘Match-Pointing’

When the tournament is over, and all pairs have played the board, the scores are compared. Match-points are then awarded to each pair to show its relative standing on that board, in this manner: Each North-South pair received one match-point for every other North-South pair which had a lower score on the board, and one-half match-point for every other North-South pair which had the same score on the board. Likewise, each East-West pair receives one match-point for every other East-West pair it beats, and one-half match-point for every other East-West pair it ties.

On this board, Pair 3 North-South scored 1,430 points, which was the ‘top score’. It beat the scores of seven other North-South pairs, and receives 7 match-points. Pair 4, which was plus 650, receives only 2 match-points, for it beat only two other pairs—No. 11 and No. 1. Pair 6 beat three North-South pairs and tied Pair 14, and thus receives $3\frac{1}{2}$ match-points.

The East-West match-points are figured in the same way. Pair 16, playing against Pair 1, was plus 100; as all the other East-West pairs had minus scores, Pair 16 beat them all and

THE MATCH-POINT DUPLICATE GAME

receives 7 match-points. This is scored on the line numbered 16, in the column headed 'East-West match-points'. Pair 15 which played the East-West cards and was minus 1,430, had the lowest East-West score, and gets a 'bottom'—no match-points at all.

With eight tables in play, there are sixteen pairs in all. Each of them plays two boards against each of the fifteen other pairs, thirty boards in all. At the end of the game all the match-points that a pair made on all thirty boards are added up, and the pair which scored the most points in the course of the evening has won the tournament. 'Average' on every board is half the maximum number of match-points you can score. In this case, the greatest number of match-points that can be scored on a board is 7; an average score would be $3\frac{1}{2}$. In an eight-table game, with thirty boards in play, average score for the evening is therefore 105 match-points, half of the maximum. Success or failure for the evening is measured by whether a pair is 'above average' or 'below average'.

Some Lessons from the Score Slip

With a clear understanding of the mechanics of duplicate bridge in mind, it is possible to draw certain conclusions from the match-point scores entered on the travelling score sheet. These conclusions have a profound influence on one's philosophy of bidding and play in duplicate bridge.

It will be observed that Pair 3 had the top North-South score—7 match-points. Pair 12 had the next-best match-point score—6 match-points. Pair 8 was third among the North-South pairs, with 5 match-points.

Pair 3, with its plus 1,430, beat Pair 12 by 730 total points, and yet received only one match-point more. Pair 12 beat Pair 8 by only 10 total points, yet Pair 12 received one match-point more than Pair 8. In other words, Pair 3's 730-point advantage over Pair 12 paid no more in match-points than Pair 12's 10-point advantage over Pair 8.

The lesson to be drawn from this is that the objective in duplicate play is to get a better score than the other pairs—it

SACRIFICE BIDDING

does not matter how much better. To get a top score by a margin of 10 points is as good as to get a top score by a margin of 2,000 points.

Exact Figuring

The second lesson we can draw from the travelling score sheet is the necessity for thinking of the exact number of points which will result from a certain bid, even when that number of points would be so picayune in rubber bridge that it would hardly be considered. In rubber bridge, a player does not even consider the fact that making four no-trump will score 130 points for him, whereas making four spades will score only 120. In duplicate bridge, when the object is to beat the other pairs by any margin at all, these differences must be considered. Observe that Pair 8, North-South, missed the slam in spades but did play the hand in three no-trump, scoring a total of 690 points made up of 190 points for tricks plus 500 for game. For this result Pair 8 received 5 match-points. Pairs 6 and 14, which reached a game in spades and won twelve tricks—exactly the same number of tricks that Pair 8 won at no-trump—scored only 680 points and got only $3\frac{1}{2}$ match-points each. Thus, the higher trick-score at no-trump must be considered in duplicate bridge.

Sacrifice Bidding

The next lesson we draw from the travelling score slip is the importance of sacrifice bidding. East-West Pair 10 received 6 match-points because, when Pair 11 bid four spades on the North-South cards, Pair 10 made a sacrifice bid of five diamonds on the East-West cards. In rubber bridge, it might not be important whether or not you decide to go down 500 points to stop an opposing game. In duplicate bridge, the distinction may be the difference between a fine match-point score and a poor one.

But the travelling score slip also illustrates the sad fact that sacrifices must be very closely figured. Pair 2, East-West, also

THE MATCH-POINT DUPLICATE GAME

sacrificed at five diamonds. So far, so good. Now pair 12 went on to five spades and Pair 2 decided to sacrifice at six diamonds. The result was that Pair 2 went down four tricks, 700 points, and received only one match-point because at five spades Pair 12 could have scored only 680 points. If Pair 2 had refrained from sacrificing at six diamonds, and had passed the five-spade bid, they might have received $3\frac{1}{2}$ match-points instead of one.

Your Real 'Opponents'

Finally, we come to the outstanding difference between duplicate bridge and rubber bridge, again a difference which we may discern by studying the travelling score sheet.

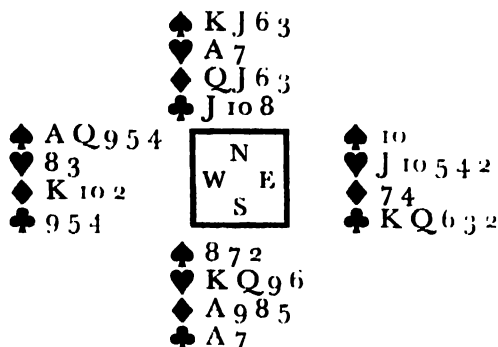
In an ordinary bridge game, when the cards are shuffled and dealt and when the result of the play is not compared with anyone else's result, you have a perfectly clear knowledge of who your opponents are. They are the players sitting at the same table with you, playing against you. But in duplicate bridge, these are not really your opponents at all. Your opponents are the other pairs playing in the same direction and holding precisely the same cards as you—the pairs with whom you will compare your scores. Of course, you want to do well against the opposing pair at the same table, for if they get a bad score it means you get a good one. But the opponents you must think 'most' about, are the other players who will 'sit in your seats'. It is those other players, whom you never meet in person on this particular deal of the cards, that you must try to beat.

The following hand will illustrate the manner in which you play against the pairs who are not at your table, rather than against the 'adversaries' at your table.

Both sides are vulnerable, and South, the dealer, bids one heart.

In rubber bridge, West, considering a one-spade overcall, would think of only one thing: 'If I bid one spade, will North double?' Considering this, West will decide not to overcall. He is afraid that if North does double the set will be 800

YOUR REAL 'OPPONENTS'



points, and it is not worth that even to stop a possible North-South game.

But in duplicate bridge, West hardly stops to consider this danger. His only thought is: 'What will other players, holding this hand, do? Will they overcall or will they pass?' If West decides that most of the other players in his position will overcall with one spade, he will overcall with one spade also. What does it matter to him if North doubles and he is down 800? So will the other West players be doubled and down 800. West therefore will not get a bad score in match-points, because there will be several other East-West pairs which suffer the same result, and West will receive one-half match-point for each of them. But if West passes one heart, and it develops that East-West can make some such contract as two or three spades, which cannot be reached unless West overcalls immediately, West will receive a very poor match-point score. He will probably be minus something like 110 or 140 points by letting his opponents make two or three hearts; at most he may be plus 100 by defeating a two- or three-heart contract. Against this, other East-West pairs will be plus 110 or 140 points by making two or three spades. Thus, if West decides that other players in his position will overcall, he can assure himself of a few match-points, at least, by overcalling as they do. Failure to overcall might find him with a bottom score.

Thus we arrive at a basic principle of duplicate bidding and

THE MATCH-POINT DUPLICATE GAME

play: It does not pay to play the lone wolf seeking to be different from other players and thus to amass a series of top scores. When you deliberately bid or play differently from the other players holding the same cards, you are gambling; you may get a better score than they get, but if their procedure works out better you will get no match-points. If you play the same as they do, at the very best you will tie them and receive as many match-points as they do. If you are playing better than they are, by adopting the same basic policy; and if you use your intelligence when eventually a choice comes up which cannot be the same at all tables, you will wind up with a few top scores which they cannot match, and with no bottoms when things go wrong.

The Danger in the Pass

Consider again the deal on page 31. South deals and bids one heart, and West decides to overcall with one spade. North doubles, and West loses eight or nine tricks—down 800 at least. But West does not care, because other West players have bid one spade, and West will get a few match-points at worst.

Now suppose it is the North player who holds the weak hand and the East player who holds the strong one—a distribution which is equally likely:

Both sides vulnerable

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>♠ A Q 9 5 4 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K 10 2 ♣ 9 5 4</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 5px;"> N W E S </div> | <p>♠ K J 6 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ Q J 6 3 ♣ J 10 8</p> |
| <p>♠ 10 ♥ J 10 5 4 2 ♦ 7 4 ♣ K Q 6 3 2</p> <p>♠ 8 7 2 ♥ K Q 9 6 ♦ A 9 8 5 ♣ A 7</p> | | |

THE DANGER IN THE PASS

In this case, if West passes the one-heart bid, North will jump to four hearts. East is too weak to bid over four hearts, and though South now passes, West, who was doubtful about a one-spade overcall, certainly cannot bid at the four-level. So West passes too, and South makes four hearts, for a score of plus 620, where if West had overcalled with one spade East would have raised him at least to the four-level and at worst East-West would have gone down two tricks—only 500 points.

A single travelling score slip can illustrate only a few of the differences between duplicate-bridge and rubber-bridge philosophy. In the following chapter the basic differences will be further explained and illustrated.

CHAPTER III

ADJUSTING YOUR BIDDING METHODS TO DUPLICATE BRIDGE

There are certain extremists who will tell you that rubber bridge and duplicate bridge are two entirely different games. There are other extremists who insist that the distinctions between the two games are negligible and in most cases non-existent. As usual, the truth lies somewhere between the two extremes.

The experienced rubber-bridge player who sits down in a duplicate game convinced that he must alter his entire technique of bidding and play and make decisions which—to his rubber-bridge mind—seem unnatural, will probably not be a very successful tournament competitor.

At the opposite extreme we have the statement of a present-day tournament champion—one of the most successful in the country.

'The object in duplicate is to score as many points as possible on every hand,' is this player's argument. 'Well, it's good to score as many points as possible on every hand in rubber bridge, too. So the type of game that wins a tournament is bound to win in rubber bridge.'

This is a plausible argument, but none the less fallacious. It would be true only if bidding and play were double-dummy, which they are not in either rubber or duplicate bridge. Guesswork may be held to a minimum by the smart player, but a certain degree of enlightened risk is necessary. No one can be absolutely sure what partner and opponents hold, whether finesses will win or lose, whether breaks will be good or bad. You take chances when the odds favour success.

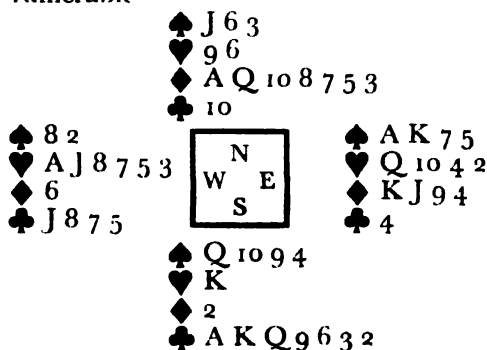
AVOID UNNECESSARY RISK

The chances you take in rubber bridge are not the same as the chances you take in duplicate.

Avoiding Unnecessary Risk

In rubber bridge, you select the contract which in the long run will score the most points for you. You are willing to risk losing a small number of points in order to give yourself a chance for a larger number. If you have the opponents on the run in a doubled contract, and can beat them an extra 500 points, those 500 points will be yours and no one can ever take them away from you. They will offset another hand which turns out unfortunately for you and on which you go down an extra 500 points in your turn. In duplicate bridge, a good score does not necessarily offset a bad score in the same way. You may get your extra 500 points on a hand when it does not hurt you.

North-South vulnerable



The bidding:

| EAST | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH |
|------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♣ | 2 ♥ | Pass |
| 4 ♥ | 5 ♣ | Double | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |

West opens his doubleton spade, and gets a spade ruff on the third round. Now, in rubber bridge, West might be tempted to lead a low heart in the hope that East has the king. Since East has given a double raise in hearts, he is

ADJUSTING YOUR BIDDING METHODS

certainly more likely to hold the king than South, and if East can get in immediately, another spade lead will assure West of an extra trick with his jack of clubs, and will cause the contract to be defeated 800 points instead of 500.

But in duplicate bridge, why should West take the gamble for those extra 300 points? If West simply lays down his ace of hearts, South's vulnerable contract will be down two tricks and East-West will have a score of plus 500. Since East-West are not vulnerable, even if they had been permitted to bid and make a game they could have scored at most 420 or 450. Thus a score of 500 will be sufficient to beat other East-West pairs who play at the normal contract of four hearts, and West does not need an additional 300 points—he will have a good match-point score whether he gets them or not.

In duplicate, a good score offsets a bad score. Suppose there is a hand on which everyone else makes four spades, scoring 620, and you make four no-trump, scoring 630. You have a top. Then on the next hand you stop at a game and score 680 while everyone else bids a slam and scores 1,430. You have a bottom. In duplicate, you have broken even on two boards. In rubber bridge, you would have tossed away 740 points.

From this and similar scoring situations we can arrive at a statement of the basic difference between the tactics of rubber bridge and the tactics of duplicate bridge, when the advisability of any bid or play is considered.

In rubber bridge you consider the *amount* of gain as against the *amount* of loss. In duplicate you consider the *frequency* of gain as against the *frequency* of loss.¹

The Question of Close Games

How this principle works out in a standard duplicate bridge situation may be better understood by considering the

¹ It is astonishing to me that in all that has been written about duplicate bridge by other writers, I have never seen this basic principle stated. Without understanding it, consciously or unconsciously, a player cannot be successful in match-point duplicate games.

THE QUESTION OF CLOSE GAMES

following hand, and comparing the rubber-bridge and match-point results.

| WEST | EAST |
|-------------|------------|
| ♠ A Q J 7 3 | ♠ 10 9 6 4 |
| ♥ A 6 | ♥ K 5 3 |
| ♦ K Q 7 | ♦ A 8 2 |
| ♣ 8 4 2 | ♣ 10 7 5 |

Both sides are vulnerable; if East-West can bid and make a game at spades they will score 120 trick-points plus 500 points for the rubber, a total of 620 points. If they bid four spades and go down one, they will be minus 100 (since it is obvious that there is no double out against them).

A glance at the hands will show that East-West must lose three club tricks and that the success of a game contract will depend upon winning the spade finesse. In any two hands in which this situation might arise, the finesse may be expected to win once and to lose once, so the figures work out exactly as follows:

When game is bid both times:

| | |
|---|-------|
| One time the finesse will win; East-West score | + 620 |
| One time the finesse will fail; East-West score | - 100 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| On the two hands together, East-West score | + 520 |
|--|-------|

When East-West stop at a part-score both times:

| | |
|--|-------|
| If the finesse wins, East-West make four and score | + 170 |
| If the finesse loses, East-West make three and score | + 140 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| On the two hands together, East-West score | + 310 |
|--|-------|

It is obvious that in rubber bridge it pays to bid the game both times; every time the finesses balance out, the player who bids the game will have scored 520 points whereas, if he had stopped short of game, he would have got only 310 points on those two hands. But there is no such advantage in duplicate scoring. Here is the way the same hand would work out at match-point scoring:

Suppose you bid the game both times. When the finesse wins, you score plus 620; you have a maximum score, are

ADJUSTING YOUR BIDDING METHODS

tied for top, and get (let us say) $5\frac{1}{2}$ match-points. The next time you lose the finesse, go down 100 points, and are tied for bottom with a score of something like $1\frac{1}{2}$ match-points. By bidding the game both times you have amassed 7 match-points on the two boards.

And now suppose you do not bid the game either time. When the finesse wins, you will make only your part-score contract with an overtrick or two, and you will be plus 170. This will lose to other pairs who bid the game, and you will get only $1\frac{1}{2}$ match-points. But if by chance the finesse fails, you will beat all the pairs who bid the game and go down, you will be plus 140, and you will get $5\frac{1}{2}$ match-points—again a total of 7 match-points on the two boards, the same as when you bid the game both times.

Other Differences

Another thing to remember about duplicate bidding is this: There is no such thing as an 'approximately equivalent score'. In rubber bridge, you do not particularly care whether you beat the opponents 500 points, or make a game of your own. In duplicate bridge you must care. If you can make a vulnerable game, it will be worth at least 600 points to you and you must not trade it for a 500-point penalty against the opponents. But if you are not vulnerable, your game will be worth only 400 points or so, and you must definitely prefer, if possible, to defeat the opponents 500 points.¹

All phases of duplicate bidding and play will be taken up in succeeding chapters, but here is a rough summary of the various phases of the game which are, or are not, materially different in duplicate bridge:

¹ In duplicate bridge all vulnerable games are worth 500 points each. This is not exactly the same as in rubber bridge. In rubber bridge, it is worth exactly 500 points extra to make game if both sides are vulnerable, for that is the amount of the rubber bonus; but it is worth only 350 or 400 points extra if you are vulnerable and the opponents are not, and it is better to beat the opponents 500 than to bid game and take the 700 rubber (since, after beating them 500, you still have a three-to-one chance to win the rubber game). In duplicate, invariably, you choose the vulnerable game rather than the 500-point set.

OTHER DIFFERENCES

Opening bids. Little difference, except for lighter third- and fourth-hand bids in duplicate.

Choice of suits for opening bid. Little difference between the two games.

No-trump bids. Almost no difference.

Responses and rebids. Considerable difference between the two games; in duplicate it more often pays to respond or rebid in no-trump or in a major suit when possible.

Pre-emptive bids. These are made less often in duplicate.

Forcing two-bids and responses. No difference.

Defensive overcalls and take-out doubles. Almost entirely different in the two games. The objectives are different in duplicate bridge and more chances must be taken in defensive bidding.

Sacrifice bidding. Far more frequent and far more important in duplicate.

Leads and declarer's play. There are not so many differences between the two games in the play as in the bidding, but there are still several factors in the play which are peculiar to duplicate bridge.

These subjects will be taken up one by one.

CHAPTER IV

OPENING BIDS IN DUPLICATE

Sound bidding always starts with sound opening bids. It is so in rubber bridge and it is so in duplicate.

In duplicate it pays to get into the bidding as often as possible and as cheaply as possible. This argues for light opening bids. But it must be remembered that in rubber bridge too it pays to get into the bidding as often and as cheaply as possible, and the requirements for opening bids in the Culbertson System permit opening suit-bids of one on the lightest possible hands consistent with soundness.

Therefore the same opening bid requirements should be adhered to in duplicate as in rubber bridge.

Opening suit-bids of one are based on honour-tricks and biddable suits. The table on the opposite page gives the bare requirements for opening bids. These conditions apply regardless of vulnerability and in any position from first to fourth hands.

TABLE OF OPENING BIDS

Duplicate or Rubber Bridge

| HONOUR-TRICKS (Culbertson Standard Table) | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| A-K | 2 honour-tricks | K-x | $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick |
| A-Q | $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks | Q-J-x | $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks |
| Ace | 1 honour-trick | Q-x & Q-x | $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick |
| K-Q | 1 honour-trick | Two + Values | $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick |

PLUS VALUES: Q-x; Queen in A-K-Q; Jack in A-J-x, K-J-x or K-Q-J; a singleton or void (only one singleton or void may be counted); also, add a plus value when the hand contains six or more honour-cards (10 or higher).

TABLE OF OPENING BIDS

BIDDABLE SUITS

Conditionally biddable: Q-x-x-x, K-x-x-x, A-x-x-x, A-10-x-x; x-x-x-x. May be bid only if another biddable suit is held.

Biddable suits: Q-J-x-x, K-J-x-x, A-J-x-x, Q-x-x-x-x, J-10-x-x-x; may be bid once but not rebid without support.

Rebiddable suits: Q-J-9-x-x, K-J-x-x-x, x-x-x-x-x-x, or better; may be rebid once without support.

OPENING SUIT-BIDS OF ONE REQUIRE:

3 honour-tricks and a biddable suit (or two conditional biddable suits)

2½ honour-tricks and a rebiddable suit

2+ honour-tricks and a six-card *major* suit.

All the following hands are typical opening one-bids. They contain full values for a bid, but no additional values.

1. ♠ K Q 6 3
♥ A Q 2
♦ K 8 7
♣ 9 4 3
Bid one spade

2. ♠ J 5 2
♥ K 10 6 3
♦ A 9 7 4
♣ A Q
Bid one heart

3. ♠ Q 8 6 5 3
♥ 8 6
♦ A K 5
♣ K J 5
Bid one spade

4. ♠ Q 6 3
♥ Q 10 4
♦ 8 6
♣ A K 8 5 2
Bid one club

5. ♠ 6
♥ A Q 8 7 5 2
♦ K 9 3
♣ 8 6 2
Bid one heart

6. ♠ A 7 6
♥ 7 5
♦ Q J 9 7 2
♣ K Q 8
Bid one diamond

The following hands should be passed exactly in duplicate bridge as they should be in rubber bridge except in circumstances which will be explained later in this chapter.

7. ♠ 10 7 6 3
♥ A 8 5
♦ A K 6
♣ 9 5 4
*Pass—
no biddable suit*

8. ♠ K 3
♥ K J 8 6 3
♦ A 8 5
♣ 7 6 2
*Pass—
only 2+ honour-tricks*

OPENING BIDS IN DUPLICATE

Similar exceptional circumstances frequently apply in rubber bridge as well, so even here the difference between the opening-bid requirements of the respective games is not great. Nevertheless there are outstanding cases in which a hand should be bid in a duplicate game when it should be passed in rubber bridge.

In general, any hand listed as an 'optional bid' in rubber bridge should almost invariably be opened in duplicate. There are two quite simple reasons for this.

1. *In rubber bridge, the principal object of bidding is game.* If you can't make a game you can't score very much anyway, so it is not worth while sticking your neck out. But in duplicate bridge, game is no more the objective of bidding than the part-score is. It is just as easy to get a good score with one as with the other.

2. *In rubber bridge, a far greater safety margin must be reserved for every bid.* If you run into a major tragedy and go down 2,000 points or so you will have to win three rubbers to get even. In duplicate, this consideration does not deter you. If you suffer a big set, it is one bad board and you are in no worse position than if, for example, you went down one at a two-heart contract when everyone else made it.

♠ 6 2 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ QJ 7 5 3 ♣ A K 6

This hand is not worth bidding in rubber bridge. Unless partner can open the bidding himself, there will be no game; even if partner has the same type of hand, something like this:

♠ QJ 7 5 3 ♥ A K 6 ♦ 6 2 ♣ 8 5 4

no game can be made. If on the first hand cited a one-diamond opening bid is made, and the opponents happen to have the preponderance of strength, they may pick up a juicy penalty. Hence, with little to gain and a great deal to lose, it is wiser to pass in rubber bridge.

But in duplicate bridge, when the objective of bidding is merely to get the best top score that the cards afford, the above hand warrants an opening bid of one diamond.

WHAT IS 'SAFETY'?

In *Contract Bridge Complete* (1945 edition)¹ the following hand is cited as an 'optional' bid; actually it is ordinarily bid only in third or fourth positions, when partner's suit take-out will not be forcing, and is passed in other circumstances:

♠ A K 6 5 ♥ 7 6 4 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ 9 4 2

Most rubber bridge players will pass this hand in first or second position, because it provides no safe rebid if partner makes a one-round-forcing response of two in a suit. In duplicate, however, one spade should be bid. It is important not to be shut out of the bidding in case the opponents get started and reach some high contract by the time it comes around to you again. It is equally important not to let the hand be passed out if your side has even the barest majority of the strength, and your three honour-tricks suggest that this may be the case.

What is 'Safety'?

Many bridge players will reasonably ask, is it safe to bid on such hands? In life it is rude to answer one question with another; in the case of this example, it is necessary to do just that. The only answer is, is it safe *not* to bid that hand? Suppose you are South, dealer, in the following deal and pass:

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|------------|
| | ♠ J 10 7 3 | |
| | ♥ 8 2 | |
| | ♦ Q 10 7 2 | |
| | ♣ K 8 3 | |
| ♠ 8 2 | N W E S | ♠ Q 9 4 |
| ♥ K Q 9 5 3 | | ♥ A J 10 |
| ♦ K J 6 | | ♦ 9 8 4 |
| ♣ A J 7 | | ♣ Q 10 6 5 |
| | ♠ A K 6 5 | |
| | ♥ 7 6 4 | |
| | ♦ A 5 3 | |
| | ♣ 9 4 2 | |

¹ *Contract Bridge Complete* (The Gold Book of Bidding and Play) by Ely Culbertson, published by Faber & Faber, Ltd.

OPENING BIDS IN DUPLICATE

After South passes, West will open one heart; North can hardly be expected to bid, and East will raise to two hearts. Now it would be foolhardy for South to overcall with two spades; for all he knows West has spade strength over him and he might go down three or four tricks, far more than the value even of an East-West game. In any event, if South is going to bid at all it is much more sensible for him to show his spades at the one-level, when only seven tricks are required for the contract and when the opponents have not yet had a chance to tell each other how much strength they have, than to come in at the two-level while the opponents are still bidding (for all South knows). Everyone passes the two-heart contract and West makes it. Against the very best defence, East-West lose only two spades, two diamonds and a club and make two hearts. North-South could make two spades.

This is sure to give North-South a very bad score. In duplicate bridge you cannot afford to let the opponents score 110 when you can play at your own contract and have a plus score of your own.

Getting into the Bidding

The safest time to get into the bidding is at an early stage and at a low level. Then it is harder for the opponents to double you. Also, because of the low level they can profit least if they do double and beat you. This does not make it worth while to bid without honour-tricks, because partner must be able to depend on you if he wishes to make a penalty double later—and penalty doubles in duplicate play are often very close (Chapter X). But, provided you have two or three sure tricks on defence, you must risk the danger that you will be somewhat embarrassed when the time comes to rebid, and you must trust yourself to find some sort of compromise rebid when the time comes.¹

¹ So far do the experts sometimes carry this theory that Morrie Ellis, one of the most successful of tournament players, once opened with one spade on the following hand:

♠ 10 8 7 2 ♥ A K 7 ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ K 9

SHADING THE HONOUR-TRICK REQUIREMENTS

When the playing strength of a hand is greater, and no response by partner can leave the opening bidder without a safe rebid, even the honour-trick content of the hand may be somewhat shaded. It is wise to open the following hand with a bid of one heart.

♠ A 6 3 ♥ K J 8 5 ♦ K J 7 3 ♣ 5 2

The hand is too weak to warrant an overcall at any level if the opponents should open the bidding, particularly if their suit should happen to be spades. Bidding one heart on the hand does not give any cause for alarm. If partner bids two clubs, a two-diamond rebid is available; if partner bids one no-trump a pass is obvious, and if partner bids spades or diamonds it is possible to raise. The general weakness of the hand makes one hope that partner will not be too bullish on a borderline hand of his own, but the danger of being shut out of the bidding is even greater than the danger of reaching too high a level by making an opening bid.

Shading the Honour-Trick Requirements

When the playing strength of the hand is even greater, and especially when the essential strength is in the major suits, a player may and should take liberties with his honour-trick quota exactly as he should in rubber bridge. The following hand is a sound opening bid of one spade:

♠ A 10 9 8 3 ♥ A 7 6 2 ♦ 6 ♣ Q 7 4

With a hand more closely resembling a freak, even greater

This is an extreme example which I do not recommend, and which Mr. Ellis himself would hardly recommend to any but the most expert and resourceful players. The hand is cited merely as an illustration and as an extreme example; a similarly extreme example:

♠ Q 10 x x ♥ A K x x ♦ Q x x ♣ x x

Such a hand as this should not be bid, though one expert cited it as a 'normal' one spade bid in match-point play. It, too, is shown here merely to illustrate the extremes to which some truly fine players go to open the bidding.

OPENING BIDS IN DUPLICATE

shading is permitted. A one-spade opening bid will usually pay on the following hand:

♠ K J 8 7 5 3 ♥ A 8 7 5 2 ♦ 6 ♣ 7

The theory that such a hand need not be bid originally, because the playing strength is great enough to warrant coming into the bidding later and at a higher level, is shortsighted in match-point duplicate bridge. The best score may depend upon outbidding the opponents at the lowest possible level if the strength is fairly evenly divided between the opponents and one's own side; and upon finding a safe sacrifice if the opponents have the preponderance of strength. It is so important to find the best suit on a two-suited hand that one of the two suits should be shown as soon as possible, so that the other may be shown at the next opportunity and partner will be given a choice at the lowest possible level.

Choice Between Two Suits

When a biddable hand has two or more biddable suits in it, the choice of suits for the first bid depends upon two factors:

1. As in rubber bridge, the player should seek the most comfortable first bid—the one which will make it easiest for him to rebid if his partner makes a forcing response. He would open with one spade on this hand:

♠ A Q 8 5 ♥ K Q 7 4 2 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ 7

because he may then bid two hearts if the response is two in either minor suit; and he should open one club on this hand:

♠ A Q 8 5 ♥ 8 7 ♦ K 7 6 ♣ A J 5 2

because that permits him to rebid in spades at the one-level over any one-over-one response, whereas an opening one-spade bid might push him up to the three-level to show his clubs.

Opening bids on three-card minor suits may be made more safely than in rubber bridge, because partner will not insist

PREPARING FOR THE OPENING LEAD

upon a minor-suit contract if he is offered an acceptable major suit, where tricks count 30 points each. Thus, one club may be the best opening bid on this hand:

♠ K Q J 7 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ A Q 8

There would be nothing dangerous about an opening one-spade bid. Neither a raise in any suit partner bids, nor a two no-trump rebid, would be likely to cause any serious trouble. However, it is just as well to give partner an opportunity to respond one heart if he happens to have a heart suit in a hand so weak that he would not bid two hearts over one spade.

Preparing for the Opening Lead

But before choosing finally between two biddable suits it is best to consider the second controlling factor:

2. The general defensive strength of the hand should be studied, to get an idea of which side is likely to play the hand—the opening bidder's side, or the opponents.

In the case of all borderline opening bids at duplicate, but particularly when fourth hand, the player must keep in mind the possibility that the opponents will play the hand. If they do, the defensive play will be an even more ticklish problem than it is at rubber bridge. At duplicate it is costly to permit declarer to make an overtrick which could have been prevented.

The bidder's ability to stand an opening lead in the suit he bids will therefore decide some close questions.

The following hand is a better heart bid than diamond bid in rubber bridge, but it is best opened with one diamond in duplicate:

♠ 6 ♥ 8 7 5 3 2 ♦ K Q 10 4 2 ♣ A K

In rubber bridge, an opening one-heart bid invites a raise from partner on three fair trumps and represents the best chance of getting to game if game is to be made. The opening heart bid is unlikely to be costly. Partner may make an opening heart lead which loses a trick, but the loss of this trick will

OPENING BIDS IN DUPLICATE

be important only of it is the decisive trick which permits the opponents to make game whereas any other opening lead would have defeated that game. This happens rarely enough, and the importance of showing a five-card suit is constant enough, so that it is worth while to show the hearts in rubber bridge even at the risk of losing that overtrick on defence.

In duplicate bridge, however, an overtrick of any sort is very often so important that it is almost as costly to let the opponents make five spades instead of four as it is to let them make four spades when they should have been beaten. With a borderline hand of this nature, it is probable that the hearts may be shown later.

Provided the suit is strong enough to relish having partner make the opening lead in it, defence against a possible adverse game contract is not a requisite of an opening bid, however. On page 104 of the *Gold Book* you are advised to pass this hand originally:

♠ 7 ♥ K J 10 8 3 ♦ K Q J ♣ 8 6 4 2

because it has a bare 2½ honour-tricks and no ace. In duplicate, you bid one heart on it when third or fourth hand. The heart bid is unlikely to cost you a defensive trick through a disadvantageous opening lead if the opponents do play the hand; and your principal interest is in competing for the final contract.

The Power of the Spade Suit

There is a considerable difference between rubber-bridge (including part-score) tactics and duplicate tactics when it comes to fourth-hand bids. While the rubber-bridge requirements are generally the same for fourth hand as for the first hand, it does after all take a sound biddable hand for a fourth-hand opening. In duplicate, the bidding is often opened fourth hand on values which would not justify a bid in first or second position.

This hand, for example, is a good fourth-hand one-spade bid in a duplicate game:

♠ K 10 9 6 5 3 ♥ J 7 2 ♦ A 10 5 ♣ 3

FOURTH-HAND OPENING BIDS

The theory of the light fourth-hand bid is as follows: The strength is probably evenly divided between the two sides, since no one had an opening bid. Therefore, one side or the other can probably make a part-score. *At other tables the bidding may have been opened*—perhaps because a player chose to bid on a borderline hand which at your table was passed, perhaps because someone chose to put in a pre-emptive or semi-psychic bid, or for any other reason. If you pass, and the cards produce a part-score your way, you will have a very bad score. If you bid, even though the opponents may have a preponderance of the strength you will have company because the same result will have been reached at other tables, and at worst you will get a few match-points.

This theory must not be carried too far. As long as you know that your partner will not fail to open on any hand of bare biddable strength, you can safely and *profitably* pass out really weak hands and know that it is the opponents who have the superior cards.

If you are fourth hand with this holding:

♠ J 6 ♥ A 9 7 2 ♦ Q 8 6 4 ♣ Q 7 5

it is foolhardy to bid. Since your partner has denied having an opening bid, it is highly probable that the opponents can outbid you and get some sort of plus score. Therefore the 'love score' you can get by passing the deal out should be your best result.

Two other factors control close decisions on fourth-hand opening bids. They are: The location of your strength: and your defence against the opponents.

Fourth-Hand Opening Bids

The question, 'Who has the spades?' is even more pressing in duplicate than in rubber bridge.

When fourth hand has less than the full requirements for an opening bid, he can generally assume that the strength is evenly divided between the two sides. In this case each side should be able to take about the same number of tricks with

OPENING BIDS IN DUPLICATE

its best suit as trump. The plus score will go to the side which has the higher-ranking trump suit—either it will play and make a part-score at its best contract, or it will drive the other side one trick too high and collect a penalty.

No sub-minimum fourth-hand bid should be made, then, on a hand whose sole strength is in the minors and which is so short in spades that an adverse spade suit must be feared.

♠ 7 ♥ 10 5 4 ♦ K J 8 6 2 ♣ A 7 5 3

This hand is a fourth-hand pass. If the two suits were spades and hearts, it would be an opening bid.

It is not necessary, however, to have a biddable spade suit for a weak fourth-hand bid. With some length or strength in spades, the player may take a chance that there is no playable spade suit out against him:

♠ Q 10 6 ♥ K 5 ♦ A J 7 5 2 ♣ 7 5 4

This hand is worth a fourth-hand bid of one diamond.

Possession of a long heart suit may also justify a bid even when the opponents may hold the spades:

♠ 7 2 ♥ A Q 7 6 5 2 ♦ Q 8 4 3 ♣ 2

It is proper to bid one heart, fourth hand, taking a chance that partner can stop spades; for if the opponents have diamonds or clubs they can be outbid.

Stronger Hands Should be Opened

The insistence on major-suit strength applies only to sub-minimum hands. A hand containing 2½ honour-tricks and a rebiddable suit, or 3 honour-tricks and a biddable suit, should be bid whether the strength is in the majors or in the minors.

Both of the following hands are listed in the *Gold Book* (page 105) as fourth-hand passes in rubber bridge. In duplicate, either should be opened with one diamond.

♠ 6 5 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ A K 6 5 4 ♣ Q J 3
♠ 8 6 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ A Q 9 8 ♣ A Q 6 5

In selecting one of two biddable suits, it is nevertheless

BIDDING HAND WITH VOIDS

necessary to keep in mind the desirability of landing eventually in a major suit if it can properly and safely be done. The emphasis on safety which controls the choice of an opening bid on the following hand when it comes up in rubber bridge is replaced, in duplicate, with emphasis on an attempt to find the best contract from a point-scoring standpoint.

♠ 4 ♥ K Q 10 6 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ A Q 9 6 3

By all the 'rules', this is an opening one-club bid; clubs are the longer suit. But in duplicate bridge the proper opening bid on this hand is one heart. The response most to be expected is one spade, and as has been seen it will not be possible to get in the heart bid if the spade response is made to a club opening. In rubber bridge one may not care about showing the hearts at all unless partner has four and can bid them himself over one club; or unless partner has a strong hand and can show it, thus making it possible for the heart suit safely to be shown secondarily. In duplicate one does care about these things; hearts count 30 points per trick, and even if partner has only three of them they will be the probable best choice for a part-score contract, if that is as high as the partnership can go. Making three hearts counts 140, and making four clubs counts only 130, so that the club suit must play at least two tricks better to be a superior contract under match-point scoring. The slight added safety to be found in the club opening must be foregone at duplicate, when safety (though it should not be scorned) is not quite so important a consideration.

Bidding Hand With Voids

The same emphasis on the major-suit bids leads to other exceptions to the more or less sacrosanct principles which obtain when total-point scoring, rather than match-point scoring, is used. For example, an experienced card player soon learns the importance of having plenty of trumps when he is void in a suit; otherwise he cannot stand the punches. So he forms the habit of bidding his longest suit when he has

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a void, almost regardless of the rank and strength of the longest suit as against whatever other biddable suits the hand may contain. For example:

♠ K J 7 5 ♥ K 10 7 5 ♦ A 8 5 3 2 ♣ —

This would normally be bid one diamond in rubber bridge. The holder of such a hand does not want to play in one of his major suits unless he finds his partner with four-card support. With diamonds as trumps, at least he will be better able to ruff clubs if necessary. A good player lives in dread of running out of trumps. Nevertheless one spade is the proper opening bid in a match-point duplicate game, because this bid makes it easier to show both of the major suits.

A choice of suits is, usually, a choice of evils as well; it is likely to be at best a compromise between advantages and dangers. A few pages back, an example was shown in which a five-card major was suppressed because it was so weak in high cards that there was reason to fear the consequences if partner happened to make an opening lead in that suit. Here is a case in which the weak major suit is bid nevertheless:

♠ J 9 7 6 4 ♥ K Q 8 3 ♦ — ♣ A Q 7 2

The proper bid on this hand is one spade, in duplicate bridge as it is in rubber bridge. For one thing, the combination of the advantage of having an extra trump to protect the void suit, and the advantage of being able to show both major suits in proper order is decisive. It is quite unlikely that the opponents will win the contract unless they overbid and can be doubled for a large penalty. Otherwise, this hand with its 5-4-4-0 distribution and $2\frac{1}{2}+$ honour-tricks is fairly sure to find a fit with partner's hand and to result either in a constructive contract or in a sacrifice bid. These facts having been determined, the holder need not fear that the opponents will play the hand, with the declarer on his left, and that partner will make a costly opening lead from some such combination as ♠ K x.

Choice of suits in responding, rebidding and overcalling will be treated in later chapters.

CHAPTER V

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

The no-trump contract is the most lucrative possible in a match-point duplicate game. This fact derives from the scoring table, which gives to the first trick at no-trump a value of 40 points. It is better to make the same number of tricks in no-trump than in any suit, and as against a minor suit the scoring advantage of no-trump can overcome a disadvantage in play of two full tricks—three no-trump scores as much as five of a minor.

If in a ten-table duplicate game you bid three no-trump and make four, and every other pair in the game merely bids and makes a vulnerable game in spades, your score of plus 630 will give you a clear top as against the plus 620 of every other pair, and you will get 9 match-points as against the 4 scored by each other pair, all because of those extra points scored for the first trick.

In spite of this, the opening bid of one no-trump is not so much used in duplicate as in rubber bridge. Because such precision is needed in selection of the final contract, expert duplicate players tend to stress the important principle—they start as low as possible in a suit, and name suits back and forth until they have a fairly clear picture of each other's distribution. Thus they seek a real or imagined advantage in the final selection of the best contract for the combined hands.

No-Trump Requirements

The requirements for an opening bid of one no-trump are the same vulnerable and non-vulnerable, the same whether

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

in first, second, third or fourth position, and the same in duplicate bridge as in rubber bridge.

The hand should have some sort of high-card strength—at least J-x-x, preferably Q-x-x or J-10-x—in every one of the four suits, and absolutely must have strength in at least three of the four suits.

The hand should have 4-3-3-3 distribution.

The minimum in honour-tricks is $3\frac{1}{2}$, and the maximum is 4. Thus, the opening one no-trump bid gives a picture of a rigidly limited hand, never much weaker or much stronger than the following example, which may be taken as a classic example:

♠ K J 6 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ Q J 7 4 ♣ A Q 4

Good duplicate players seldom take liberties with these basic requirements. After two prominent experts won a national pair tournament, one of them gave partial explanation for their success in these words: 'We played a very careful game. Neither one of us opened with a one no-trump bid once during the tournament.' In other words, they considered it more conservative to investigate the possibilities of the various trump suits before going into no-trump.

Thus, one no-trump is seldom bid except on the ideal hand such as the one shown above. Neither of the following hands would be an opening one no-trump bid:

1. ♠ A J 3 ♥ K 8 7 6 ♦ A J 8 5 ♣ K 10
2. ♠ Q 8 6 5 ♥ A J ♦ A Q 10 ♣ K 10 6 2

No. 1 would be opened with one heart; No. 2, with one club. To bid one no-trump on either would offer certain practical advantages in the play—failure to give the opponents too much information might, for example, prevent them from finding their best opening lead if the eventual contract is no-trump, and, for another advantage, an immediate no-trump bid on such a hand as No. 2 might spell the difference between game and no game, because of the heart holding. If a heart opening must come up to the A-J, that combination might produce two stoppers whereas if

THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

partner should become declarer at no-trump a lead through the A-J might reduce it to a single heart stopper.

But outweighing these considerations is the possibility that a superior major-suit contract may be found—in hearts on No. 1, in spades on No. 2—which could not be reached if an opening one no-trump bid were made. The idea is that if you start with a suit you can always bid no-trump later; if you start with no-trump you may never find the suit, because partner may have only a four-card major and it may be dangerous for him to bid it over one no-trump.

Three-Card Minor-Suit Bids

Avoidance of the opening one no-trump bid on all doubtful hands has led to special emphasis in duplicate bridge on opening bids in three-card minor suits. Such bids are among the most valuable and also among the most abused bidding methods known to bridge.

A minor-suit opening, especially in clubs, usually eliminates rebidding problems which may arise if the hand is opened with one in a major suit. This makes it possible to open on borderline hands with relative safety, and still leave the way open to a profitable contract in a higher-ranking suit if partner holds one. The following hand might be hard to rebid if the normal opening bid of one heart were made.

♠ 10 9 3 ♥ A Q 4 2 ♦ K 7 5 ♣ A 8 2

If the opening bid were one heart and partner responded two diamonds or two clubs, the opening hand would be left without a suitable rebid. In rubber bridge he might take a chance and raise partner to three of the minor suit, for if this encourages partner to bid a doubtful game the tremendous profit from making the game may justify the gamble. In duplicate bridge, gambling on game does not pay (see page 42). Therefore it is best on such a hand to bid one club, thus providing a safe rebid no matter what partner responds—one no-trump may be bid over a spade response, a heart response may be raised, and one heart may be bid over one diamond.

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

The opening bid on a three-card club suit may also serve to solve the rebidding problem which is inescapable when a near-minimum hand contains four-card suits in spades and diamonds:

♠ Q 10 6 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A K 4 2 ♣ A 7 6

The generally accepted rule is to open with one diamond on such hands, for if partner responds one heart there is a safe rebid available, and if partner responds two clubs it is acceptable to take a chance and raise him to three clubs, though the hand is somewhat weak for a bid at the three-level. This reasoning, however, is based upon the ever-recurrent argument that in rubber bridge it pays to try for game, even if the odds are somewhat against making it. That argument does not hold in duplicate bridge and it is dangerous to raise partner to the three-level on such a hand. An opening bid of one club may not paint an accurate picture of the hand, but at least it does avoid much of the danger that the bidding will get out of control and reach too high a level for safety.

What to do When Partner Raises

With neither of the foregoing hands is the opener actually prepared to stand for a raise in his own suit. If he opens one club and partner raises him to two clubs, he will be embarrassed. But even here the danger is even less than it is in rubber bridge. It is so important in duplicate to play in a major or in no-trump rather than in a minor that partner will not give a prompt raise in a minor suit unless he has exhausted all possibilities of finding a better contract. So, when partner does raise the club suit it may usually be assumed that clubs are the dominant suit in his hand, and the opener need not fear to pass if he is too weak to make a rebid which would amount to a try for game. An example might be:

OPENER

♠ Q 10 6 2
♥ 7 3
♦ A K 4 2
♣ A 7 6

RESPONDER

♠ A 5
♥ 8 6 4
♦ 9 6 3
♣ Q 10 8 4 3

THE THREE-CARD MINOR INSTEAD OF NO-TRUMP

Here the opener would bid one club and the responder would raise to two clubs. If there is an intervening pass, the opener might as well pass. He is not strong enough to want to play two no-trump facing such a weak response; to bid two spades would be an unwise gamble, considering that the responder probably cannot hold four spades or he would have bid them himself; and to show the diamond suit would accomplish nothing because a diamond contract is no better than a club contract. Two clubs will probably be the best spot; and if the opponents now decide to reopen, the opener has strength enough defensively to give some promise of beating them.

The Three-Card Minor Instead of No-Trump

The three-card minor suit solves the problem of at least two different types of fairly strong hands which at rubber bridge would be opened with one no-trump.

First, there is the 'close' no-trump hand—one having the proper distribution and the proper number of honour-tricks, but with so few intermediates as to be deficient in playing strength when compared to the average no-trump hand. For example:

♠ K 5 3 2 ♥ A Q 6 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ K 6 3

This hand, with $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks divided among the four suits, would still be a doubtful no-trump opening in duplicate. If partner gives a questionable raise to two no-trump, the odds would be against making even that eight-trick contract.

To open with one spade would not solve the problem, for if partner raises to two spades you would not know whether to try two no-trump, or pass.

A one-club opening is likely to avoid both these problems.

The three-card minor suit may also be bid instead of one no-trump on hands containing one wide-open suit, but otherwise having full no-trump values; for example:

♠ 10 6 5 ♥ Q 8 6 4 ♦ A J 10 ♣ A K 6

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

This is not a bad no-trump bid in rubber bridge. Even if partner must pass and the opponents can run the spade suit, a no-trump contract should be about as good as any. In duplicate, you do not wish to take this chance, for possibly partner has four hearts and a contract of two hearts can be made but only one in no-trump. It is most important not to be content with a score of plus 90 if the cards would provide a score of plus 110 in another suit. The hand is a better club bid than no-trump bid.

The Three-Card Diamond Suit

A three-card diamond suit may be bid as the three-card club suit is, but it is not quite so desirable. Over a one-club bid, partner can respond with one in any suit; if the opening bid is one diamond partner will have to bid two clubs if he happens to have a club suit. Therefore, all other things being equal, the club opening is preferred. However, it is better to open with a three-card diamond suit than with a doubleton club; and if a three-card diamond suit contains the tops whereas a three-card club suit in the same hand does not, the diamond is a better bid.

♠ A K 4 ♥ 8 6 4 2 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ 9 7 6

It is better to open this hand than to pass it, and it is better to bid one diamond than one club. With a hand so weak there is danger that an opponent will become declarer, and in that event you will not want partner to lead clubs to you. *The minimum for a three-card minor-suit bid in a weak hand should be Q-10-x, K-x-x or better.*

When the hand is stronger, it does not make quite so much difference, because the opponents are less likely to win the final contract; and as between a strong three-card minor and a weak four-card minor, there is little choice.

♠ A Q ♥ J 10 8 4 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 8 6 5 2

Here it makes little difference whether one diamond or one club is the opening bid. I might add that with such a

HOW NOT TO HANDLE THE 'SHORT CLUB'

hand when the only unstopped suit is a four-card suit and when there is a doubleton tenace such as the A-Q of spades, the advantages of an opening one no-trump bid are likely to be such that it is superior to either minor-suit bid.

How Not to Handle the 'Short Club'

In introducing the subject of opening bids on three-card minor suits, I mentioned the fact that this is one of the most abused methods known to bridge. The abuses do not occur in the opening bids themselves, which in general are made quite intelligently by most duplicate players, but in the responses to all club bids. Apparently the average bridge player, knowing that his partner may open with one club on a three-card suit, insists on treating all opening clubs as though they were definitely made on no more than three cards.

The following incident is offered as a horrible example. North held the following hand:

♠ A 10 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ A J 6 4 ♣ 10 9 5 3

His partner, South, dealt and neither side was vulnerable. The bidding went as follows

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♦ | 1 ♥ |
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♥ | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

North very blithely passed on the second round, refusing to raise his partner's club suit even though he held four trumps to the 10-9 and two outside aces, including a fit with South's spade suit. When he was asked later why he had not raised clubs, North's reply was brief and eloquent: 'We use the short club,' he said.

This anecdote seems unbelievable, yet it is not only true but typical. Such players are so obsessed with the fear that partner might hold only three clubs that they throw away all the advantages of normal bidding on the far more frequent occasions when partner has opened one club on the type of hand which usually calls for a club bid—a genuine biddable

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

club suit in a genuinely biddable hand. In this particular case, the full deal was:

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

| | | |
|-----------|--|-------------|
| ♠ 9 8 5 4 | ♠ A 10 | ♠ Q 6 2 |
| ♥ A 5 2 | ♥ 7 6 3 | ♥ K Q J 9 4 |
| ♦ K 9 5 | ♦ A J 6 4 | ♦ Q 10 8 3 |
| ♣ 7 6 2 | ♣ 10 9 5 3 | ♣ Q |
| | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div> | |
| | ♠ K J 7 3 | |
| | ♥ 10 8 | |
| | ♦ 7 2 | |
| | ♣ A K J 8 4 | |

By excellent defence, North-South held the two-heart contract to seven tricks and beat it one, for a score of plus 50.¹ However, if North had raised clubs they could have made at least four clubs for a score of plus 130, and if East-West had been so rash as to go on to three hearts North-South could have doubled and beaten them 300 points. Therefore the North-South score of plus 50 was very poor.

How to Treat Partner's Club Bid

Opening bids on three-card minor suits are therefore safe only when the bidder's partner can remember this one simple principle: Treat all club bids as though they had been made on a genuine biddable suit, at least until the later stages of bidding when it may become apparent that the suit was a short one.

¹ South opened the king and ace of clubs. East ruffing the second and immediately leading a diamond to dummy's king. If North had won this contract would have been made, but North ducked. Now if East drew trumps North would have to get two diamond tricks, and if East led another diamond South could get a ruff. East could have made his contract only by leading diamonds first from dummy, and finessing, before drawing a third round of trumps.

WHEN TO PREFER NO-TRUMP

The principal argument in favour of this method is that an opening club bid will usually be made on a genuine biddable suit even if on certain occasions the same player does bid one club on a three-card suit. It is perfectly obvious that a player is just as likely to hold the following hand:

♠ A 6 ♥ Q 7 3 ♦ 8 5 2 ♣ A K 9 7 4

as to hold this hand:

♠ A K 9 7 4 ♥ A 6 ♦ 8 5 2 ♣ Q 7 3

Therefore partner will hold a good club suit when he bids one club just as often as he will hold a good spade suit when he bids one spade. Furthermore, he will make a genuine bid in clubs more often than he will make a genuine bid in any other suit, because when he does have two equally good biddable suits in a hand like the following:

♠ A Q 7 2 ♥ 6 5 ♦ K 6 3 ♣ A Q 8 5

he will invariably bid the club suit in preference to the spade suit.

Thus, it will not only be wise, it will generally be safe to raise partner's club opening when a raise is indicated by the responding hand. Naturally, match-point scoring requires that you look for a better contract when the strength of the hand warrants it (see Chapter VIII). You should not, however, be afraid to raise a club suit when your hand as a whole is biddable and the only reason not to raise is the fear that partner has not a club suit. Assume that he has the clubs, and raise.

The three-card minor-suit bid should be used when no other reasonable bid is available. Do not look for opportunities to bid a three-card minor; look for opportunities to avoid doing so. Any intelligent person would rather have five trumps than four, and four trumps than three.

When to Prefer No-Trump

Likewise, a three-card minor-suit bid should never be preferred to a sound opening one no-trump bid. As most experts

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

use the opening no-trump in duplicate, it is a much neglected bid and does not receive half the usage that so valuable a bid deserves. A one no-trump bid has a valuable obstructive effect, it tends to shut the opponents out of the bidding and, if they do come in, it facilitates those close doubles which in duplicate bidding are so important (see Chapter XI).

A minor-suit contract in duplicate is far inferior to any reasonable no-trump contract. A major-suit contract is likely to be just as good and perhaps a bit better than a no-trump contract. Therefore, you avoid one no-trump openings when they might shut you off from finding acceptable major-suit contracts. But you do not avoid no-trump openings when the only thing they can shut you out of is a minor-suit contract. The following hand is an excellent one no-trump bid in duplicate:

♠ K 10 4 ♥ A J ♦ K 10 9 6 3 ♣ A J 4

You are not worried about missing the best spot in diamonds, for you would rather play no-trump; nor worried about missing a spade contract, for in order to prefer spades to no-trump you must find partner with five of them and if he has five spades he can bid them over one no-trump. This hand is especially well adapted to a one no-trump opening because of the heart holding; but even with weaker or less advantageous doubletons, a 5-3-3-2 hand in which the five-card suit is a minor, and in which there is strength in every suit, can be best shown by a one no-trump bid if it is in the range of $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 honour-tricks.

Responses to No-Trump Openings

The success of opening no-trump bids in duplicate depends on the utmost precision and conservatism in responding and rebidding. Neither partner should stretch a point to try for game, since on almost any hand which is close between a part-score and a no-trump game, the simple fact that you are in a no-trump contract and scoring the maximum for every trick you win should be enough to guarantee at least

RESPONSES TO NO-TRUMP OPENINGS

an average score. Both partners should also remember that as long as game is not going to be reached, and the no-trump contract seems about as good as any, it is unwise to change to a suit contract.

The usual advice on the following hand is to make a temporizing response in rubber bridge:

♠ 10 8 4 ♥ 9 7 ♦ Q 10 3 ♣ A 10 9 4 2

Partner opens with one no-trump; you respond two clubs, just in case partner is well over the minimum no-trump hand and can bid again, in which case there should be a chance for game. In duplicate, you pass one no-trump; you do not take gambling chances for game.

With a trick or so, and a five-card suit including the tops, it is far better to pass one no-trump than to take out to a minor suit which seems considerably safer.

♠ 10 7 3 ♥ 6 ♦ A J 8 5 2 ♣ 10 6 5 2

Partner's one no-trump bid should be passed on such a hand. If he can make one no-trump, it is as good as making two diamonds: if by chance he can make two no-trump, it is better than making three diamonds, which is about the most you could hope for. Since partner has at most four honour-tricks, game is out of the question anyway.

With a five-card suit lacking the tops, and about a trick or slightly less, it is best even in duplicate to take the no-trump bid out into two of a suit. This is particularly so if the distribution of the hand is unbalanced.

1. ♠ Q 8 7 5 3 ♥ 6 ♦ K 7 4 ♣ 9 8 5 2
2. ♠ 9 7 ♥ Q 7 2 ♦ J 10 8 7 5 3 ♣ J 2

On No. 1, bid two spades over partner's one no-trump; on No. 2, bid two diamonds.

The no-trump bidder should almost always pass a response of two in a suit. He should take it to be not only an expression of weakness, but also a statement of the responder's opinion that the hand will play better in the suit than in no-trump.

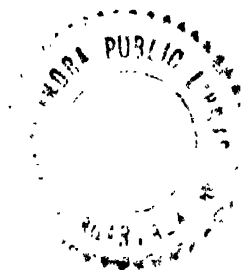
With enough strength to give hope of game, the responder should of course prefer a raise in no-trump to a suit take-out.

NO-TRUMP AND THREE-CARD MINOR-SUIT BIDS

The no-trump contract will count 10 points more. In rubber bridge, the desire for the more lucrative no-trump score makes a jump to three no-trump preferable:

♠ A K 8 7 5 3 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ 9 2

Opening bids of two, three or more in no-trump, like strength-showing bids in general, are the same in duplicate bridge as in rubber bridge.



CHAPTER VI

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

There is a striking analogy between duplicate bidding and part-score bidding in rubber bridge. The rubber-bridge player who is an accomplished tactician in part-score situations—especially in those cases where his opponents have the part-score—has a headstart toward being a good duplicate bidder, even if he has never seen a duplicate board.

In rubber bridge, when the opponents have a part-score an artificial situation is created in which a contract like two spades, which would ordinarily be unimportant, assumes tremendous importance because it is enough to give them a game worth several hundred points. In duplicate bridge, similarly, letting the opponents make a two-spade contract, when they might have been outbid or held to some inferior score, may mean a difference of several match-points—equivalent to several hundred points in rubber bridge.

The bidding in duplicate is therefore highly competitive, even when neither side can make more than two or three odd-tricks at its best contract, because the objective of each side is to reach its best contract no matter how high or how low that contract may be.

Objective number one in duplicate-bridge bidding may therefore be expressed as follows: *Get into the bidding if you can.*

Objective number two is: *Look for the contract at which you can score the greatest number of total points*, and do not forget that in duplicate bridge it may be far better to score 110 points than to score 100 points.

Keeping the Bidding Open

When your partner has made an opening bid, of course

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

your side is 'in the bidding' already. The question that remains is: Do you 'keep the bidding open light'? And how light?

The considerations are not exactly the same in duplicate and rubber bridge. The following factors influence response in duplicate:

1. You are not anxious to reach a doubtful game contract in duplicate bridge. Even if partner has a power-house which opposite your weak hand will produce a 50-50 play for game, you do not care whether you are there or not.

2. Assuming you are going to stop at a part-score contract anyway, you do not care whether the contract is one, two or three. In rubber bridge it is better to bid two spades and make it than to bid one spade and make two, because a 60-point part-score is better than a 30-point part-score. In duplicate either result would be plus 110, and the one-spade contract would be superior because it is safer.

3. The opponents are far more likely to reopen the bidding in duplicate bridge (see page 105).

Therefore, a good general principle to follow in duplicate is: 'When in doubt, pass.'

When to Pass Partner's One-Bid

The situations in which you should prefer to pass partner's opening bid may be enumerated as follows:

First, and obviously, you pass on a completely hopeless hand, just as you would in rubber bridge or in any other form of the game.

♠ Q 8 5 2 ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ Q 6 3 ♣ 8 5 2

Partner opens with one heart; you pass. There is no reason to suppose that there will be any better spot than hearts, and with such a hand you have no desire to increase the contract.

A one no-trump response should not be used in duplicate bridge merely as a standard negative response on a one-suited hand which is too weak for the suit to be shown. Fine players

WEAK ONE-OVER-ONE RESPONSES

have had good results from passing partner's opening one-spade bid on a hand like this:

♠ 8 3 ♥ A J 10 4 2 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 9 6 4 2

It would be dangerous to bid one no-trump. On any borderline hand partner will have a tendency to pass a no-trump take-out, because that is the most profitable place in which to play for a part-score. With strength in only one suit, you are not prepared to play a no-trump contract with this hand. Here again a pass will act as a warning, and will also make it safe to show the hearts later if the bidding goes like this: .

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | Pass | 2 ♦ |
| Pass | Pass | 2 ♥ | |

Because of the original pass, South cannot misunderstand the nature of the two-heart bid.

Weak One-Over-One Responses

It is usually better to pass partner's opening bid than to take out in a very weak major suit with a very weak hand. Because the hand is weak, there is a strong chance that the opponents may win the final contract despite partner's opening bid and your response. Because the suit is weak, there is danger that partner may lose a trick defensively by opening your suit, and losing tricks in defence is the surest way to get bad scores in duplicate bridge.

It is poor policy to make a major-suit response, as so many players do, on a hand like this:

♠ J 6 5 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ J 5 2 ♣ 9 7 5 3

If partner opens with one heart, it will usually be better to pass than to respond one spade. Here again it must be remembered that approximately four times out of five the opponents will reopen the bidding, so nothing will be lost if partner is very strong; he will have a chance to bid again. If partner has just a bare opening bid, the opponents are fairly sure to get into the bidding whether you respond or pass, and in this case the response is likely to cost you a trick in defence.

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

Thus, you seldom can gain by responding and you often may lose.

This reasoning does not apply when you have a stronger hand:

♠ J 10 7 6 ♥ A 7 ♦ A J 5 ♣ 9 7 5 3

If partner opens with one heart, this hand warrants a response of one spade. The strength of the hand, combined with the strength partner has shown by his opening bid, makes it unlikely that an opponent will become declarer. One spade is the lowest possible response, offers another major suit in which it may be best to play the hand, does not shut off an eventual no-trump contract, and is unlikely to cost anything defensively because you do not expect to be on the defensive in this deal.

Exceptions Due to Vulnerability

There are frequent exceptions to these general principles on keeping the bidding open when vulnerability conditions are favourable.¹

When the opponents are vulnerable and you are not, it will be dangerous for them to overcall if your partner has opened the bidding and you have responded. It will be far safer for them to get into the bidding if you have passed partner's opening bid, thereby confessing your own weakness. Therefore, a response should often be made on a truly hopeless hand, as a sort of obstructive measure to keep the opponents out of the bidding. If partner bids one heart, you might respond one spade on:

♠ J 10 8 6 5 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ J 6 3

In spite of partner's opening bid, this hand is so weak that it is not at all unlikely that the opponents have a game. Even if the response—which would be unwarranted in any other

¹ Much more will be written later about vulnerability, which at all times has a profound effect upon duplicate-bridge bidding. In these discussions 'equal vulnerability' means that either both sides are vulnerable, or neither side is vulnerable; 'favourable vulnerability' means that the opponents are vulnerable and you are not; 'unfavourable vulnerability' means that you are vulnerable and the opponents are not.

NO-TRUMP RESPONSES

circumstances—leads partner to rebid somewhat freely and to get too high, there is a strong chance that the penalty he takes will be a suitable sacrifice and will not get a bad score. In other cases, the response may keep the opponents from reaching their best contract.

Responses on Stronger Hands

So much for the weak hands on which you respond, if at all, with fear and trembling. Such hands are in the minority. More often, when partner opens the bidding, you will hold some substantial values—perhaps not a strong hand, but enough to leave no doubt in your mind as to the fact that you are going to bid something. On such hands you still have problems. The choice of responses in duplicate bridge is just as important as the choice between passing and responding at all.

The duplicate player must never forget that if the hand must be played at a part-score contract it is better to play at no-trump than in a major suit, and in a major suit rather than in a minor.

It is better to choose a response which (if passed) will produce a good part-score result than to choose a response which will make it somewhat easier to reach a close game.

No-Trump Responses

On any hand ideal for no-trump play and with balanced distribution—4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 with only three-card support for partner's suit—a no-trump bid is usually preferred to a sound raise in a major.

South opens with one heart. West passes. North holds

♠ A 10 3 ♥ QJ 7 ♦ 10 9 7 2 ♣ J 9 4

In rubber bridge he would raise to two hearts, a somewhat more encouraging response than one no-trump. In duplicate he responds one no-trump. Unless South has unbalanced distribution (in which case he will rebid) the combined hands

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

should play equally well at either contract, and North cannot risk missing the no-trump contract.

In choosing his response on a hand of this sort, North must consider that there is some danger attached to whichever responses he makes:

1. South may have a borderline hand on which he would pass one no-trump but would bid over two hearts and reach and make a game. In this case the one no-trump response would cause the game to be missed.

2. South may have a weak hand on which he would pass either one no-trump or two hearts. In this case the two-heart response may produce an inferior score.

Now the situations are compared. No. 1 is a remote possibility, because if game can be made it is probable that South is strong enough to bid over any response North makes; even if a game is missed, other pairs are likely to miss it on such a close pair of hands, and the no-trump part-score may outstrip the heart part-score at which some other pairs will stop.

Situation No. 2 is a more likely possibility, and avoids the consequences of perhaps reaching a doubtful game and going down one; for if South can rebid over one no-trump and push on to game the contract will probably be a safe one.

On this reasoning, the no-trump response is selected.

One-Over-One Rather than No-Trump

On a stronger hand—one which warrants a rebid, and on which there will surely be a chance to rebid—it is unnecessary to bid no-trump immediately. If you hold the following hand and partner opens with one diamond, it is not necessary to leap to two no-trump:

♠ A 6 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ A 6 5 2

A response of one heart is better; the one-over-one response is forcing, no-trump may be bid later, and it is well to offer a choice of as many spots as possible. Partner may have a diamond-heart semi-two-suiter; he may have nothing in

RAISES

spades; and a heart contract might play one or more tricks better than a no-trump contract. This does not apply, however, to a choice between no-trump and a minor suit:

♠ K 5 ♥ J 10 7 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ A K Q 7 5

Over partner's one-diamond bid, respond two no-trump. In no circumstances will you wish to play this hand for a game at clubs or diamonds; you would have to make six clubs (120 trick-points) to beat three no-trump (100 trick-points). Even if a no-trump contract is something of a gamble, it is worth taking. To bid clubs could hardly help and might shut off a 'neutral' club opening which a doubtful opponent might make.

The preference for a major suit over a minor applies to all responses in which a choice between two suits is offered for the first response, and in which it might not in all cases be safe to show both suits.

♠ 6 3 ♥ K 8 5 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A Q 10 6 3

Partner opens one diamond; respond one heart. The club suit is strong enough and the honour-trick content is high enough to warrant a two-club response. However, if you respond two clubs and partner rebids two diamonds you might be reaching a little high if you bid two hearts. Therefore you respond one heart in the first place and make sure that the possibility of a major-suit fit is explored at the lowest and safest level.

Raises

Raises of partner's suit, when given primarily to keep the bidding open, should be sound raises when partner's suit is a major. With support for partner's major suit, it is not necessary to stretch a point to raise him; even if you pass he will be in an acceptable part-score contract.

♠ 8 6 2 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ A Q 7 4 3 ♣ 7 2

It is quite proper to raise partner's one-heart bid to two hearts, whereas with a similar hand, if partner's opening bid is one diamond, one does not raise:

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

♠ 8 6 2 ♥ K 7 5 3 ♦ A Q 7 4 ♣ 7 2

One heart would be bid over partner's one-diamond bid.

With a major suit of your own, plus support for partner's suit, prefer to raise partner's major if your hand is fairly weak (usually, this means a hand containing less than two honour-tricks):

♠ A 7 6 5 2 ♥ 10 7 6 5 ♦ 8 3 ♣ Q 7

Partner has opened with one heart. If you respond one spade and his rebid is two hearts, two diamonds or two clubs, you will be somewhat too weak to bid three hearts. Therefore you raise immediately to two hearts, since as between the two major suits a contract in one is as good as a contract in the other. Of course, if your hand warrants two bids it is more informative to bid your own suit first and raise later:

♠ A 7 6 5 2 ♥ K 7 6 4 ♦ 8 3 ♣ Q 7

On this hand you respond one spade to partner's one-heart bid, for whatever his rebid you will be able to raise him freely—bidding three hearts if he bids two hearts, and jumping to three hearts rather than giving a simple preference if he rebids in no-trump or a minor suit.

Minor-Suit Raises

A raise in a minor suit usually denies ability to make any no-trump or major-suit response. Nevertheless, on a weak hand it is still better to raise the minor suit than to make a one-over-one response in a major suit in which you are not prepared for an opening lead.

♠ 6 2 ♥ J 10 5 3 ♦ Q 10 6 4 ♣ K 7 2

Partner has opened with one diamond. Raise to two diamonds, do not bid one heart. For one thing, the two-diamond bid exactly describes the nature of the hand, which is an advantage in any game.

There is a further point which should be considered when the responder's weak major suit and minor-suit support are

FREE BIDS

'touching'—that is, when they are in suits consecutive in rank, as in this case with a heart suit and diamond support. A primary purpose in bidding one heart would be to find partner with a four-card heart suit. However, if partner had four hearts and four or five diamonds and a weak hand, he probably would have opened with one heart instead of one diamond. If partner has a four-card heart suit and a strong hand, he will be able to rebid two hearts over your raise to two diamonds anyway, and nothing will be lost by the two-diamond response. Finally, the raise to two diamonds will make it somewhat more difficult for the opponents to get into the bidding, since they cannot bid one spade or two clubs over it.

There are some hands in which an immediate heart response might be the only way to get into a heart contract, but they are few in number. They are outweighed by the cases in which any bid on so weak a major suit would mislead partner in the defence.

In general, it is well to stick to a principle previously implied (page 47): Do not bid a major suit weaker than Q-x-x-x unless your hand is strong enough to make you feel that your side will surely obtain the contract. Then, when you are on the defensive, you will be able to stand a lead in the suit you have bid; when you bid a suit in which you cannot stand a lead, it will be in a situation in which your side will not have to play the defence.

Free Bids

The requirements for free raises and for free responses of all kinds are influenced by the extremely keen competition which exists in duplicate bridge when a part-score contract is concerned.

It is fatal to let the opponents play and make two hearts, which would put you minus 110, when you could play and make two spades, which would make you plus 110. It is almost as costly to let the opponents play and make two spades, which again would put you minus 110, when you could bid three hearts, go down one trick doubled and not

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

vulnerable, and be minus only 100. But you can never find out what your best suit is and how far you can go in it unless both partners get into the bidding. When the partnership hands apparently do not fit, be cautious about bidding; when the partnership hands apparently do fit, the winning duplicate player must be bold about bidding in some situations in which, at rubber bridge, he would pass because he has not enough honour-tricks.

A free raise in the Culbertson System always requires a comfortable portion of honour-trick strength—usually at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. In duplicate bidding, distribution more than honour-tricks controls free raises. For example:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | ? | |

North holds:

♠ Q 9 ♥ J 8 5 4 ♦ K 9 4 ♣ J 9 7 3

From a practical standpoint, North has no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick. The queen of spades can be largely discounted because West bid that suit. Nevertheless, North gives a free raise to two hearts. If he does not show that heart support immediately, East may raise the spades and it will be too dangerous thereafter for either North or South to re-enter the bidding at the three level. By raising hearts, North puts his side in a position—if this is one of the cases in which such a result is possible—to sacrifice and take a cheap penalty rather than to let the opponents make a part-score.

Distributional Raises

With sufficient distributional support for partner's suit, a free raise may occasionally be given on a hand whose high-card value is practically nil. Suppose neither side is vulnerable and you hold this hand:

♠ Q 10 8 6 5 2 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ 10 6 5 ♣ 6

Your partner opens with one spade and the second hand

DISTRIBUTIONAL RAISES

overcalls with two hearts. In rubber bridge you would pass; a free raise would guarantee more top strength than you have. In duplicate, you raise to two spades.

If the overcall is jumped to four hearts, and partner passes, you can make up your mind later as to what you should do, and probably you will bid four spades. In rubber bridge, if it proves that you go down one whereas you could have beaten the opponents one, the swing is 200 points and there is no great tragedy. But in a duplicate game, the swing between plus 100 and minus 100 is more likely to be the difference between top and bottom.

The free raise gives partner encouragement on which he can perhaps rebid or double even if his spade suit is weak. If he passes, you will know you should sacrifice at four spades because the four-heart contract probably cannot be beaten. If he doubles, your own heart holding is such that you know he must have doubled on high cards and you may pass.

But mere trump strength without distributional support, or mere adequate trump support combined with a minimum in high cards, does not suffice for a free raise even in duplicate bridge. Here is another situation in which partner has opened with one spade and has been overcalled with two hearts: you hold:

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. ♠ K 8 7 5 2 | 2. ♠ A 5 4 |
| ♥ 7 4 | ♥ 8 7 5 |
| ♦ 10 6 5 | ♦ K 10 3 |
| ♣ 7 6 2 | ♣ 8 6 5 2 |

With either of these hands, you pass. With No. 1, you have absolutely no defence values, and in fact your spade length weakens part of the honour-trick holding on which partner probably counts. To raise would be very misleading. Partner will make allowances for a possible shaded raise, but he cannot make enough allowance to compensate for a hand like that. With No. 2, you have some defence but otherwise nothing of value to partner.

Thus, 'light' free raises should not be *too* light.

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

Free Suit Responses

The desire to get into the bidding necessitates some chance-taking at duplicate. In the long run, this is not so dangerous as it is in rubber bridge. The handling of the following situation involves gambling perhaps 1,100 total points, but in duplicate this still comes down to a maximum gamble of the number of match-points available on that particular board.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | 2 ♣ | ? | |

Both sides are vulnerable and North holds:

♠ Q 10 7 5 4 2 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 7 5 ♣ A 6 4

To bid two spades in this situation is extremely dangerous and is likely to be very embarrassing to partner. Two spades is a forcing response; partner may have been prepared to rebid over a one-spade response, but is not prepared to rebid safely at the three level. If partner had a minimum bid and does not fit spades, the two-spade bid is likely to force North-South up to a point at which they can be doubled and defeated as much as 1,100 points. In rubber bridge, that would be equivalent to throwing away a rubber and more on a single hand.

In duplicate, of course, there is equal danger that such a contingency will arise and will result in a bottom; but this is balanced by the danger that failure to get in the spade bill will permit East-West to make a part-score when North-South could have made a higher one. No one in rubber bridge would gamble 1,100 points to gain 140; in duplicate bridge, however, it is often little more than a 50-50 gamble—a good score against a bad one.

Judging from the Opponents' Bids

One must trust his opponents to a certain extent; when the opponents are obviously trying to keep you from bidding, it may mean that an apparently dangerous bid is actually safer

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

than it would be if the opponents had not revealed their weakness.

In the following situation North-South were vulnerable and the bidding went:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 3 ♦ | ? | |

North held:

♠ K 10 ♥ J 10 6 5 4 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ J 7 6

East-West were using the jump overcall of three diamonds as a weak, purely shut-out bid. Nevertheless, it would seem absurd for North to risk a free three-heart bid—a new suit response, and therefore forcing—on a hand which technically would hardly justify a two-heart response to the one-spade bid if West had passed. But in one case, when the bidding went this way, North did pass, East raised to four diamonds, and after two passes North had nothing to do but double. Four diamonds went down two tricks and North-South were plus only 300.

Another player, over the three-diamond bid, made a free bid of three hearts. The four-diamond bid came in at this point, but South held the following hand:

♠ Q J 8 6 2 ♥ A Q 7 ♦ 5 ♣ A Q 8 3

Five hearts could be made; but whether North-South got to five hearts and made 650, or doubled East-West at a five-diamond sacrifice and beat them 500 points, they would have a score far superior to the result of North's pass.

Re-opening the Bidding

There are many other cases in which there is no percentage in bidding at rubber bridge, but a bid is advisable at duplicate. The following case is an oft-quoted example of horrible rubber-bridge tactics:

♠ A Q 8 7 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K 8 6 5 ♣ A 7

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

You are vulnerable; you deal and bid one spade. Second-hand overcalls with two hearts, your partner and fourth hand pass, and it is up to you again.

At rubber bridge you pass very, very rapidly. To rebid in such a situation is the mark of a losing player. What is there to gain by bidding? No more than a part-score, surely, when partner was too weak for a free bid. What is there to lose by passing? No more than the unimportant part-score the opponents may make at two hearts (and maybe partner has hearts behind the bidder and they cannot even make their two-heart contract). *What is there to lose by bidding two spades?* Maybe as much as 800 points, if fourth hand is loaded with spades and just waiting to double. Why risk 800 to stop a part-score?

But at duplicate bridge, you do not sell out for two hearts. You bid two spades. True, you may go down 800, but that is highly unlikely. Offsetting this danger is the chance that partner has something like this:

♠ J 6 3 ♥ J 9 8 4 ♦ Q 4 ♣ Q 8 6 2

Though he could not raise freely, you can probably make two spades; the opponents can probably make two hearts. You cannot afford to let them score 110 when you can score it for yourself. Even if you cannot make two spades, there may be no double out against it and you may go down only 100 points—still a saving. Finally, there is the possibility that your bid will drive the opponents to three hearts and they will go down one.

When you have a second biddable or near-biddable suit in addition to the suit you showed previously, and you have not yet had a chance to offer partner a choice of the two suits, there is further incentive for a re-opening which would be foolhardy in rubber bridge.

Both sides vulnerable; South holds:

♠ K 4 ♥ 8 6 ♦ A K 8 7 2 ♣ A 8 7 5

The bidding:

| WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 1 ♦ |
| 1 ♥ | Pass | Pass | ? |

PUSHING THE OPPONENTS

South must re-open, in duplicate bridge, with a bid of two clubs. He has almost nothing to gain by it—North has passed twice, and cannot have much—except the possibility that two, even three, clubs may be made and that the opponents seem fairly sure to make one heart. To pass will be almost a sure minus score; it is so important in duplicate to get a plus score if possible (Chapter X) that South must risk the danger of going down two or three tricks doubled for the chance of scoring plus 90 instead of letting the opponents score.

Almost the only time that you refuse to re-open the bidding in duplicate (except when it is obvious that you could not make your contract) is when it seems that the opponents have a better spot in which to play the hand if only they can find it.

In this situation, neither side is vulnerable:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 1 ♣ |
| 1 ♦ | Pass | Pass | ? |

East holds:

♠ 6 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ A J 6 ♣ K Q J 7 6 3

West could not even put in a free bid in spades or hearts at the one-level, though the fact that he passed originally would permit him to make a shaded free bid—he would not have to worry for fear his strength would be overestimated by his partner. East might safely bid two clubs, but he is afraid that if he does North-South will find a fit in spades or hearts. Since North-South obviously have at least one-half of the high-card strength in the pack, they can probably outbid East-West in one of the major suits. It is better to let them play diamonds, where any contract they make will count only 20 points per trick, and in which East's diamond strength argues that they cannot make a great many overtricks. East therefore passes and lets South play one diamond.

Pushing the Opponents

The analogy between duplicate bidding and rubber-bridge

BIDDING FOR PART-SCORES

bidding when one side or the other has a part-score should be mentioned again here. Good players develop certain reflexes, so that when they get into a competitive bidding situation they have a tendency to try to push the opponents up—'just one more trick'. Such tactics often work out beautifully in rubber bridge with a part-score, for example:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ |
| 2 ♥ | Pass | Pass | |

North-South have 60 on score. In rubber bridge it may pay East to bid three diamonds, even if he knows he will go down a trick or two. North or South, rather than give up a cheap game for a small penalty, may bid a doubtful three hearts or three spades.

The consideration at rubber bridge is that if North-South can make three hearts, they will also get a game worth several hundred points. East will not mind going down 200, say, to stop the game. In duplicate bridge this does not apply. If North-South get three hearts, it will be worth precisely 140 points to them; you cannot dare bid to a point at which they can double and beat you 200.

Therefore, East-West can safely overbid only so long as they cannot be beaten as much as the value of North-South's maximum part-score. When a competitive bid would risk a larger penalty than that, East-West must stop pushing.

CHAPTER VII

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Bridge players start out by learning a bidding system in which the objective is almost entirely the reaching of a game contract. Most bidding systems are based upon rubber-bridge considerations, and in rubber bridge the objective of bidding is game.

In duplicate, however, game is no more the objective than is any other contract, provided it is the best that can be reached on the partnership hands.

The 'theoretically ideal contract' on any deal is the product of the best efforts of both sides. Take a case in which neither side is vulnerable, and in which the best North-South can do is to bid and make two hearts, while the best East-West can do is to bid and make two spades. The original objective of the North-South bidding will be to reach two hearts and have their opponents let them play it there, so they will score plus 110. Likewise, the objective of East-West will be to be permitted to play at two spades, scoring plus 110.

If East-West do bid two spades, then North-South acquire a different objective: They must bid three hearts, which will be down only one and if doubled will leave them minus only 100, instead of the 110 they would have lost at two spades. At this point East-West must double, for if they bid three spades they will be down and have a minus score, while by doubling they will at least score plus 100.

Therefore a final contract of three hearts, doubled, with a resultant score of plus 100 for East-West, is the theoretically

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

ideal contract—the product of the best efforts of both sides.¹

Every overcall in duplicate bridge must have a purpose, but sometimes the purpose will be merely to get into the bidding. It will be difficult to know and to reach the ideal contract if you have not fully explored the trick-taking possibilities of your side. Such a purpose would hardly occur to a rubber-bridge player, for there would be no case (barring part-score situations) in which he would be interested in taking a one-trick sacrifice purely to stop a cheap opposing part-score. In duplicate such sacrifices are important and occasionally require borderline overcalls.

You need be in no particular hurry to get into the bidding if your strength or distribution is such that you can safely come in on a later round. The hands on which you hasten to overcall in duplicate fall rather into the following types. These hands are weak defensively, so that there is a possibility of the opponents' being able to make game. Stronger hands will be dealt with later.

First Typical Borderline Overcall

1. You overcall on a one-suited hand which is weak in defence and which is likely to be of value only if partner can support a specific suit.

♠ 8 ♥ Q 10 8 6 5 3 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ 10 6 3

Except in unfavourable vulnerability conditions, you would overcall one spade with two hearts on this hand. In any vulnerability conditions you would overcall a one-club bid with one heart. In rubber bridge such a hand would be a very dangerous vulnerable overcall and you would pass it.

You overcall in duplicate on a hand of this sort, with a long trump suit and unbalanced distribution, because if you

¹ The ultimate strategical objective, of course, is to use obstructive or deceptive methods which will prevent the opponents from reaching their best contract, or will cause them to overbid so that they can be doubled and set for a greater score than the theoretically ideal contract would provide. The matter of bidding strategy will be taken up later.

SECOND TYPICAL BORDERLINE OVERCALL

find a fit with partner you are likely to set up a good sacrifice against an opposing game, even if partner has little or nothing in high cards; and you may be able to outbid the opponents in a part-score situation. But since such a hand depends substantially on finding a heart fit with partner, it would be a dangerous gamble to re-enter the bidding later, at the level of three or higher. Therefore you show your suit as fast as possible.

The overcall could easily work out to a situation like this:

| WEST | EAST |
|----------------|------------|
| ♠ 8 | ♠ 10 6 5 3 |
| ♥ Q 10 8 6 5 3 | ♥ K 9 7 2 |
| ♦ K Q 7 | ♦ J 5 4 |
| ♣ 10 6 3 | ♣ K 2 |

East-West probably cannot stop a spade game even if the king of clubs wins a trick; but if permitted to play at four hearts doubled they will be down only one or two tricks, a cheap sacrifice, and if not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents they even have a good sacrifice at five hearts.

However, a hand of this type is not a good overcall, except in favourable vulnerability conditions, if the distribution is balanced. The extra losing trick is decisive.

♠ 8 4 ♥ Q 10 8 6 5 3 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ 10 6

An overcall at the one-level might be risked, even if vulnerable, but an overcall of an opposing one-spade bid with two hearts would be bad in unfavourable or equal vulnerability conditions. If the opponents are strong enough to bid a game, there probably will be no good sacrifice against them. They might be able to slaughter two hearts. If they stop at a part-score it will probably be unprofitable to play a heart contract unless partner is able to enter the bidding.

Second Typical Borderline Overcall

The second type of borderline hand which justifies an overcall in duplicate bridge is likewise a one-suited hand, the one suit usually being a minor. On such a hand the overcall acts

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

as a lead-directing bid if the opponents should wind up in a no-trump contract; but the principal reason for overcalling is that if the opponents stop at a low contract it will be dangerous to re-open the bidding (called 'backing in' in the in-elegant bridge vernacular).

♠ 10 6 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ K Q J 7 2 ♣ 9 8 3

Overcall a one-spade or one-heart bid with two diamonds (and, of course, a one-club bid with one diamond). If you pass and the contract is two hearts or two spades when it comes around to you again, it would be dangerous to bid on the sole hope that partner has diamonds. At rubber bridge, of course, you would not overcall.

An overcall on such a hand is dangerous when vulnerable, yet it should be made. Occasionally it will result in a large penalty score against you, but more often it will go undoubled and will put your side into the bidding at the lowest and therefore the safest level.

Third Typical Borderline Overcall

The third type of borderline hand on which you overcall in duplicate is a two-suiter, ranging from strong to weak.

♠ K 10 9 8 4 ♥ Q 10 6 4 2 ♦ 3 ♣ 4 2

Overcall an opening diamond bid with one spade; the distribution of the hand is strong, it is essential to find the superior suit, and unless the first suit is shown immediately it may prove impossible to show both suits safely. It is true that partner may be induced to double the opponents, looking to you for high cards, and that your weakness may force you to rescue; but this must be overlooked beside the greater importance of preparing to contest for a part-score or to sacrifice against a game contract.

The wisdom of overcalling on such a hand is not affected when one of the suits is a minor:

♠ K 10 9 8 4 ♥ 3 ♦ 4 2 ♣ Q 10 6 4 2

ADVANTAGE OF SHOWING SPADES

A one-spade overcall should be made. It may prove too expensive to show the clubs later, but in any event the spade suit will have been shown, in case partner fits it.

Bidding so weak a hand is always a choice of evils; if such a hand is bid at all, it should be bid to best advantage. A holding like this one is frequently misbid:

♠ K 10 9 8 4 ♥ 3 ♦ Q 10 6 4 2 ♣ 4 2

It is not unusual to see an opposing one-club bid overcalled with one diamond on this hand. The theory is that if one diamond is doubled, a rescue may be effected in spades at the one-level; if the opponents bid hearts, the spade suit can be bid at the lowest possible level. However, unless partner can bid freely it would not be worth while to bid this hand a second time anyway. To suppress the major suit merely to prepare for a rescue (which is always of dubious wisdom) would be to give up the greatest advantage to be found in overcalling in the first place—the showing of a spade suit in which the opponents can be outbid.

Advantage of Showing Spades

The importance of the spade suit is so great in duplicate bidding that one may often accept several other risks in order to show possession of five or more spades.

♠ J 9 6 5 3 ♥ 7 2 ♦ A K Q 6 ♣ 7 4

If an opponent opens with one heart, you overcall with one spade on this hand (unless your side is vulnerable and the opponents not vulnerable). In rubber bridge you would pass.

In rubber bridge one passes because there is too little to gain by overcalling. No game is in prospect. Showing such a weak spade suit risks having partner make a damaging lead if the opponents play the hand. The top diamonds promise some defence against an opposing game contract, and if the opponents can make a part-score contract, what of it?

But in a duplicate game, one must keep in mind the need for finding a profitable sacrifice contract if one exists. In this

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

particular case, a profitable sacrifice can be found if partner has spades, almost without regard to what else he holds. Give partner a hand like this:

♠ K Q 10 7 ♥ 9 4 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ Q 10 6 3

and the opponents can probably make a game at hearts, while at four spades you will go down only two tricks—a good save unless you are vulnerable and the opponents not vulnerable. Yet partner can never bid if you do not, and you cannot bid if you wait until the opponents reach their game, which they conceivably will do in just one more round of bidding.

Even in a two-suited or semi-two-suited hand in which the spades are outnumbered, the spade suit is preferred in overcalls.

♠ A K 8 2 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ 4 ♣ Q J 10 6 5

Overcall an opponent's one-heart bid with one spade, not with two clubs. The clubs stand by in case spades are doubled.

In this particular case there are several advantages to the spade overcall: It is a better suit for partner to lead than clubs, if the declarer is on your left; and it can be shown by a one-bid whereas clubs would require a two-bid. But the principal reason for the spade overcall is that spades count 30 points a trick and clubs only 20, and if a jump raise in hearts is coming up you do not want your spade suit to be shut out by it.

The Level at Which You Can Overcall

On any weak hand, an overcall at the one-level is always far more desirable than an overcall which would require a bid of two.

There is first the obvious advantage of the former in being one trick lower and therefore one trick safer. Also, it is more than twice as difficult for the opponents to double a one-bid as it is to double a two-bid. And, most significant of all, the very fact that you can overcall with a one-bid means that so far at least you have a higher-ranking suit than the opponents: if the strength is evenly divided you can outbid them. When

WHEN TO EXPECT A DOUBLE

you have to overcall at the two-level, it usually means that they have the higher-ranking suit and can outbid you. Since an opponent has opened the bidding, unless you have at least opening-bid strength there is no sound reason to think you are stronger than the opponents; the converse is probably true. Therefore your two-level overcall, as compared with the one-level overcall, gives you less expectancy of gain and greater danger of loss.

The conclusion to be drawn from this reasoning is as follows: When you overcall at the one-level, you probably will not be doubled. There will, admittedly, be some cases in which you will be doubled and badly beaten, but these will be very rare. Furthermore, the fact that you may overcall with a one-bid and reasonably hope to escape a double should not be accepted as *carte blanche* to make unsound overcalls or ridiculous psychics. Such tactics will result in even greater grief when your partner, misunderstanding them, takes you to a higher level where you definitely will be doubled.

When to Expect a Double

The general principle to follow is this, assuming that every overcall you make is sound or at least on the borderline: At the one-level you should expect that you will *not* be doubled. At the two-level or higher you should expect that you *will* be doubled.

Before making any bid in duplicate with the probability or a reasonable possibility that the opponents will double, your first consideration must be the vulnerability status.

The weak two-suited hands shown on page 84, each of which justified an overcall of one spade, would fall far short of the strength required to overcall at the two-level. These, for example, are the same cards previously shown but in different suits.

♠ 3 ♥ K 10 9 8 4 ♦ Q 10 6 4 2 ♣ 4 2

In no vulnerability condition would this be strong enough for an overcall of an opposing spade bid, when it would be necessary to bid two hearts or diamonds to overcall.

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

What does one need for an overcall at the two-level? The answer to this question is so inextricably tied to the vulnerability conditions that it can be viewed in no other light.

The Differing Vulnerability Conditions

Vulnerability is by far the most important factor in duplicate bidding. It is disregarded only when one side has such a preponderance of the strength that it may proceed to bid its game or slam without contest or interference by the opponents. Whenever both sides are in the bidding, no player should make any bid, pass, or double without being keenly aware of the vulnerability status both of his side and of his opponents.

In duplicate bridge there is no Rule of 2 and 3 to serve as a rough guide in all situations, as there is in rubber bridge. There are four distinct vulnerability situations and each calls for individual treatment in deciding on an overcall.

Neither side vulnerable. You cannot afford to go down more than one trick, doubled, to stop an opposing part-score, nor more than two tricks, doubled, to stop an opposing game. You do not overcall if you can be doubled and down three.

However, pay particular attention to that phrase 'you can be doubled'. The following hand is a perfectly acceptable one-spade overcall of an opposing opening bid in any of the other suits:

♠ A K Q 6 3 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ 8 7 3

If an opponent has four spades and partner has nothing of value, this hand may win only four tricks and go down three, 500 points. Since the opponents probably have to lose two spade tricks, minus 500 would be a bottom score. At best they could score 450 by playing the hand themselves. However, there is no double of one spade out against this hand. One spade will be doubled only if your left-hand opponent happens to hold five or six spades; and if he does have such a holding, which is unlikely enough to begin with, his double probably will not be left in anyway. Therefore the one-spade overcall is safe, it informs partner, it may call a lead, and it

THE DIFFERING VULNERABILITY CONDITIONS

may make it impossible for the opponents to reach a good no-trump contract.

However, an overcall at the level of two or higher is dangerous on a sketchy suit and a doubtful hand. The following hand is a good quick pass of an opposing one-heart bid:

♠ 9 3 ♥ 7 2 ♦ K Q 8 6 5 2 ♣ K 8 4

and partner may expect a two-level overcall to show something fairly substantial, like the following:

♠ 8 ♥ K 5 ♦ A Q J 7 5 2 ♣ 8 6 5 2

On such a hand you would bid two diamonds over an opponent's opening bid of one in either major suit.

When both sides are vulnerable, the situation is much like the one in which neither side is vulnerable. Nevertheless, there is one important difference: If the opponents think they cannot make a game, they will double you for even a one-trick set, because that will give them 200 points, and will be better for them than any part-score they can make. You must especially beware of cases in which you are long in the opponents' suit:

♠ 9 6 5 2 ♥ A J 7 6 4 3 ♦ K 7 ♣ 6

Your right-hand opponent opens with one spade, and it is your length in spades that should warn you away from a two-heart overcall. You are far too likely to run into a situation like this:

WEST

♠ 8
♥ Q 10 8
♦ Q J 8 5 3
♣ A J 4 3

SOUTH

♠ 9 6 5 2
♥ A J 7 6 4 3
♦ K 7
♣ 6

With the South hand you have overcalled East's one-spade bid with two hearts. West sees danger of a misfit in spades, is

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

too weak to hope for a no-trump game, and has no reasonable action to take other than a double. Even if South finds some support in dummy he will probably go down at least one, and it is quite likely that East-West could not make a game.

However, the situation with both sides vulnerable is not by any means the worse for overcalling. A hand with considerable playing strength but very little defensive strength is still worth an overcall, because it will be hard for the opponents to double. If, as you suspect, their hands seem to promise them a game they cannot dare double unless they can expect to beat you 800 points. And the incentive to you in overcalling, on a distributional hand, is the possibility of finding a sacrifice spot at which you can go down a safe 500 and stop an opposing game. This is a good spot for overcalling, even at the two-level, on two-suiters:

♠ 7 ♥ 9 ♦ K Q 10 7 3 ♣ Q J 8 7 5 4

This hand justifies an overcall of a spade or heart bid. Two diamonds is preferred to two clubs, for it facilitates showing both suits. With a good fit in partner's hand for either of your minor suits you will be willing to go to five clubs or five diamonds over an opposing contract of four in one of the majors.

When you are vulnerable and the opponents are not, you are in by far the worst position for overcalling. Your non-vulnerable opponents will be on the lookout for any opportunity to double you, because a two-trick set will be better for them than any game, and a one-trick set, as usual, will be better than any part-score. Even an overcall at the one-level in such a position should be on such a hand that either you do not believe there will be a double out against you or you believe that if doubled you have a good chance to make your contract.

However, it is still difficult to double a one-bid, and especially when you have solidity in your trump suit it is desirable and not too dangerous to overcall.

♠ 8 7 ♥ K Q J 10 9 ♦ Q J 7 6 ♣ 9 3

This hand warrants a one-heart overcall of an opponent's

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one-club bid. It is difficult for the opponents to double a one-bid without trump tricks, and your heart solidity will not leave them many trump tricks. Over a one-spade bid, however, pass; in the vulnerability circumstances the opponents are laying for you and if they can double two hearts they can probably beat it two tricks.

An overcall at the two-level, when you are vulnerable and your opponents are not, is actually a very strong bid. It requires an even stronger hand than the same overcall would require in rubber bridge. If you overcall an opposing spade bid with two diamonds, vulnerability being unfavourable to you, you need about seven sure tricks and a possible eighth. It is a hand on which you do not double solely because there is some response you cannot stand. The hand might be like this:

♠ 9 ♥ J 5 ♦ A K Q 10 7 5 ♣ K 10 9 7

In these vulnerability circumstances, what influences you is the knowledge that not once in twenty hands does one find a sound vulnerable sacrifice against a non-vulnerable game. People simply cannot figure quite closely enough to know that their opponents can make the game and that they cannot go down more than one trick. If the opponents cannot make their game, or if the vulnerable sacrifice goes down more than one trick, the bid will have produced a bottom.

Thus one of the strongest incentives for getting into the bidding is removed, and overcalling loses its principal advantage while retaining all its hazards.

When you are not vulnerable and your opponents are, the conditions are termed 'favourable' to you. That is a weak word to apply to so vast an advantage as you have in competitive bidding. Especially at the one-level, but nearly as much at the two-level, you may overcall freely with little fear of being doubled. It is not that the opponents *cannot* double you, but that they *will not*. If they are strong enough to double, they very likely see some possibility of game, and to compensate for that game they must be prepared to beat you four tricks. There are few hands on which a four-trick set of a low

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

contract seems reasonably sure. Rather than take such a chance they will usually pass up the opportunity to double and go after their game.

As in other situations, spades are the best suit and warrant the lightest overcalls. Here is a hand on which a famous player, not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, overcalled a one-heart bid with one spade:

♠ A J 5 3 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ J 10 8

It worked out unusually well, of course; that is the reason it is remembered. The opponents reached four hearts, the overcaller's partner carried him on to four spades, and the opponents finally got to five hearts and were down one. This was not the greatest part of their tragedy, at that; they had already been fixed by the overcall. They could have beaten four spades only 500 points, which would have been a bad score because other pairs playing their way scored 620 at four hearts.

An overcall at the two-level requires more strength—about two additional playing tricks—but may be undertaken virtually without honour-tricks on a weak freak:

♠ 8 6 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ 2 ♣ Q 10 8 7 5 4 3

This hand, which would make any rubber-bridge player shudder, is a two-club overcall of a vulnerable opponent's opening bid, when the holder of the hand is not vulnerable.

Overcalls on Strong Hands

The examples of overcalls previously shown have been, mostly, weak or minimum hands. This does not necessarily preclude overcalls (or doubles, depending upon the opposing bid) on such strong hands as the following:

1. ♠ A Q 10 9 5 3 ♥ 7 2 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ 7 3
2. ♠ 8 5 ♥ K J 10 4 ♦ A K Q 7 5 ♣ 4 3
3. ♠ 6 ♥ Q J 10 7 5 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ A K 10 6

There are nevertheless many hands which look strong but would be very bad overcalls.

WHEN NOT TO OVERCALL

When Not to Overcall

The first typical situation in which one does not overcall is when he holds a balanced hand with enough high-card strength to make it doubtful that the opponents can bid a game.

♠ 8 3 ♥ 7 5 2 ♦ A 8 5 3 ♣ A K 7 4

To overcall an opposing one-heart or one-spade bid on such a hand invites the opponents to double if they are strong; and a double can hardly fail to give them a good score and you a bad one, because this hand has practically no trick-taking power apart from its high cards. If by chance the opponents are not strong and do not double, the overcall nevertheless has gained nothing. They would have stopped at a part-score anyway, if they were bidding accurately (for it is unlikely that against such a hand they would be able to bid or make a game). If they do stop, you have enough strength to 'back in', and there is always the chance that they will get too high and that you will be able to beat them with no risk and with great profit.

Refusal to overcall on such a hand is not actually trapping, though it sometimes has that effect. If a similar hand contains strength in the opponents' suit, the most profitable course is to pass as a trap.

♠ K 10 7 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A Q 7 3 2 ♣ K 5

If an opponent opens with one spade, no bid would be safe; a pass could hardly lose and might gain, while an overcall would be courting disaster. But if the opposing bid is one heart, the case is an entirely different one; one does not trap with weakness in the opponents' suit. The strength and distribution of this hand warrant a double of one heart.

Avoid Overcalling a One No-Trump Bid

The second typical situation in which one should not overcall is when the opponents' opening bid was one no-trump.

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

There is no greater advantage you can give the opponents than to overcall their one no-trump bid. The no-trumper's partner knows precisely what his partner has, and how far their combined hands can go. Knowing what his partner has, he knows just what their chances are to defeat your overcall. If the no-trumper's partner has anything you probably cannot outbid them, and if the no-trumper's partner has a bust your best bet is to let declarer suffer at his no-trump contract which will probably yield you the top score you want.

An exception is made only in the case of freaks or extreme solidity.

1. ♠ 6 ♥ A 10 8 6 5 3 ♦ — ♣ QJ 9 7 5 3
 2. ♠ 6 ♥ QJ 10 9 8 6 5 ♦ K QJ ♣ 9 6

Either of these hands requires a two-heart overcall of one no-trump. On No. 1, you are gambling for very high stakes. If partner fits either suit you can probably make three or four-odd in it, even though the no-trump bidder holds stoppers in both suits; and, since you will be doubled, any contract you make will probably be a game. On No. 2, a single trick-winner in partner's hand will enable you to make two hearts; at worst you will be down only one; and again there is a chance that your contract will be doubled and made and will give you an undeserved game, which is often a top and always a good score.

Danger When Both Opponents Have Bid

A third typical situation in which it is usually unwise to overcall develops when both opponents have bid. There is a considerable difference between this bidding situation:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | 1 ♥ | ? |

and this one:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | ? |

In the first bidding diagram, West passed originally, but may still have a fair hand in distribution but not in honour-tricks. In the second situation, West passed an opening bid by

DANGER WHEN BOTH OPPONENTS HAVE BID

the opponents, and is either deficient in both honour-trick and distributional strength, or is trapping; meanwhile, both opponents have bid and know something at least about each other's hands. If East overcalls he stands an increased chance of being doubled and having the double left in, because of the information the opponents have given each other about their holdings; while if it turns out that West was trapping, East's overcall is likely to rescue the opponents from a difficult situation without helping his side (for if West *was* trapping, and North-South properly stopped very shortly, either East or West will surely be able to re-open the bidding and reach whatever contract their side can make).

Thus, it takes a very strong hand for East to overcall in this situation; it could not be a hand on which he is gambling in the slightest, because he has nothing to gain from the gamble. An even stronger hand is required when the bidding goes like this:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 2 ♣ | ? |

Here, in addition to the increased danger of overcalling at the two level, East must face the fact that North has made a response which shows some strength: on the basis of that, South may double an overcall with confidence. This is the more so since if North does not have strength in honour-tricks with which to support a double, he probably has a long club suit in which he can safely rescue, all of which increases South's freedom to double. Even when not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, East must proceed cautiously.

An exception to this principle is found in the situation in which the opponents have made it clear that they are going to reach game, and it is possible to overcall them at a low level:

North-South vulnerable

The bidding:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 2 ♥ | 2 ♠ |

East overcalled on:

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------|-------|
| ♠ Q J 10 9 3 2 | ♥ J 9 4 3 | ♦ 10 | ♣ 9 8 |
|----------------|-----------|------|-------|

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

North-South being sure to reach a game (because of North's forcing take-out) and, from East's hand, being apparently on their way to a slam, East was able to overcall safely. The opponents could hardly double a non-vulnerable two-spade contract. They might be trading a slam for a 700 penalty. (North-South did continue bidding, and East's overcall made it possible for his side eventually to sacrifice profitably against a lay-down slam.)

The Double is Preferable

The fact that duplicate strategy requires some chance-taking in overcalls should not blind us to the fact that the overcall is always an undesirable method of entering the bidding. It shows only one suit. No matter how rigidly limited, and in duplicate it cannot be limited nearly so much as in rubber bridge, the overcall remains somewhat indefinite and often leaves partner in doubt as to his proper response. Finally, the overcall is usually dangerous, and when doubled it leaves partner in a quandary—he usually has a suit but he hasn't the vaguest idea of whether or not he will find support for it in the overcaller's hand. Thus he cannot tell whether a bid will be a genuine rescue or simply carry him out of the frying-pan to a hotter hell.

On any three-suited hand which tempts you to overcall, first consider the take-out double. To do this you must somewhat adjust your notion of how strong a take-out double should be. As a rubber-bridge bid, the take-out double is reserved for strength-showing purposes; but remember that in rubber bridge the objective is game. In duplicate the objective is a plus-score or a small minus on any contract, and in the pursuit of this objective the take-out double will often be a far safer bid than the weaker-sounding overcall.

The following situation was discussed a few pages back:

Neither side vulnerable

The bidding:

SOUTH
1 ♥

WEST
Pass

NORTH
2 ♣

EAST
?

DOUBLE RATHER THAN OVERCALL AT ONE-LEVEL

It would be foolhardy for East to overcall with two spades on this hand:

♠ K J 8 6 5 ♥ 6 ♦ A Q 8 2 ♣ J 7 4

South would be in a perfect position to double, and if West does not have support for spades it would not be at all unlikely for East to find himself down three tricks. He cannot stand this, even to stop a game. But a double is relatively safe; if West fits either spades or diamonds, the East-West hands together will probably have enough strength to preclude a double even if West is weak, and by getting into the bidding East-West may make their superior spade suit the medium of a successful struggle in the battle for a part-score.

Double Rather than Overcall at One-Level

Even when the overcall might be made at the one level, the take-out double is usually preferable, and at worst is likely to save a guess later. In the following case, both sides are vulnerable:

♠ K 7 6 3 2 ♥ 7 ♦ A J 4 ♣ K J 7 6

The opening bid is one heart. Holding this hand over it, you properly hesitate to bid one spade on such a flimsy suit, but are equally hesitant to be shut out of the bidding. A take-out double, however, is reasonably safe. Unless you are unfortunate enough to find partner with one of those hopeless Yarboroughs lacking even a long suit (except perhaps four or five small hearts) you are likely to emerge with a whole skin. If you do run into one of those hopeless hands, remember that it is a duplicate game and the penalty, however large, affects only that one board.

A hand like the following, against an adverse spade bid, is a close question in any case; but the one thing that is sure about it is that it is too weak for a two heart overcall of one spade in any vulnerability condition.

♠ 6 ♥ K Q 8 6 5 ♦ A J 8 2 ♣ J 7 4

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

If any action is to be taken, the take-out double is the only bid within reason. Unless partner can bid hearts (or make some strength-showing response) there is no future in the hand anyway, not even for a part-score. If partner is weak, the take-out double will at least insure that the combined hands will be in their best suit, whether hearts, diamonds or clubs; and in their best suit they are far less likely to be doubled.

The take-out doubles is also used as a strong bid in duplicate, and the doubler's rebids, if any, almost always suffice to make clear what sort of hand he has, and to prevent the partnership from reaching too high a contract. The responder should allow in his later bidding for the possibility that the take-out double may have been shaded, but in his first response he should proceed as though the take-out double were a sound one of full strength.

East holds:

♠ K 7 5 2 ♥ Q 8 7 4 3 ♦ A J 10 ♣ 6

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Double | Pass | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | Pass | | |

It costs East nothing to make his jump response of two hearts; even if West has the most tenuous of all possible duplicate doubles, the two-heart contract must be safe. When West has such a double, he makes it clear by passing the jump take-out (which is not an absolute force) as he did in the above bidding diagram. With a slightly shaded double like the following he would raise to three hearts and leave the decision up to East:

♠ 6 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ Q 8 5 3 ♣ K J 8 3

And with a full-strength take-out double like this:

♠ 9 6 ♥ A K 6 2 ♦ K Q 7 4 ♣ K 9 5

he jumps to four hearts (or, with a different type of hand, rebids in no-trump or in a suit of his own).

In fact, the greatest danger in the light take-out double is

RESPONSES TO TAKE-OUT DOUBLES

not that partner will have a fair or a good hand and go too far, but that he will have a weak hand and go down at any bid; and this same danger also exists when doubles are full strength.

Responses to Take-Out Doubles

Responses to take-out doubles should be made normally in duplicate bridge, but with especial emphasis on two points:

1. In favourable vulnerability conditions, a free response must be made on weaker hands and at higher levels than would justify such a response in other vulnerability conditions.

In the following bidding situation, North-South are vulnerable and East-West are not.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Double | 3 ♥ | |

East will bid three spades on this:

♠ Q 7 6 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ Q 10 9 5 3 ♣ 6 2

and four clubs even on a hand as weak as this:

♠ J 5 4 ♥ 8 6 ♦ K 7 ♣ 10 8 7 6 5 3

If partner has a shaded double, the vulnerable opponents probably have a game, and a sacrifice will pay. If partner has a sound double, the response is probably safe.

2. In responding to partner's take-out double in a match-point game, special emphasis is also placed on reaching a major-suit or no-trump contract, which is more lucrative than a safer minor-suit contract would be. Of course, even when the objective of bidding is game, as in rubber bridge, a major-suit response is preferred to a minor, because the major-suit game is one trick cheaper:

♠ J 9 6 3 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A 10 9 6 2 ♣ 10 3

To partner's take-out double of an opposing one-heart bid, the response is one spade. But in duplicate bridge this is carried much farther, even to the point of making 'unnatural' responses:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Double | Pass | 1 ♠ |

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

East holds:

♠ K 8 4 ♥ 7 2 ♦ 9 7 6 3 ♣ Q 8 4 2

No-Trump Responses to Doubles

Because a no-trump contract is so desirable, a no-trump response to a take-out double shows the responder's desire to be left in (or raised) and should therefore be made only on a hand of fair strength—about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks with a smattering of honour-cards throughout the hand. On the following hand it is unwise to respond one no-trump to partner's take-out double of one heart:

♠ 7 3 ♥ K 8 6 3 ♦ 10 7 5 3 ♣ 8 4 2

Two diamonds would be a better response. But on a fairly good hand, like the following, it is better to respond one no-trump than two diamonds:

♠ J 5 ♥ J 10 7 6 ♦ A Q 8 2 ♣ 10 4 3

While obviously the responder should keep in mind the fact that match-point duplicate doubles are often much weaker than a double in rubber bridge could be, as in the case of the opening three-card minor-suit bid (page 59) it is as disastrous to let this fear lure you into unnatural responses or unwarranted underbidding. However shaded partner's double, his hand after all will contain a couple of tricks and some support for every unbid suit. A fair responding hand justifies a jump response, which is not forcing and which partner may pass if his hand was a minimum.

♠ K 10 8 5 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ 7 5 3

This is a jump two-spade response to partner's double of one heart.

Bidding the Opponents' Suit

With an even stronger hand, the bid in the opponents' suit is much used, especially when the strength of the responding hand is distributed and the doubler should be invited to take his choice of the unbid suits:

RESPONSES TO OVERCALLS

♠ Q 10 5 3 ♥ K 9 8 4 ♦ 8 6 ♣ A Q 5

Partner has double one diamond; the best response on this hand is two diamonds. It should not necessarily be taken to show either first-round control or a stopper in the opponents' suit. It does, however, show that the principal strength of the hand is in the other suits, as otherwise a one or two no-trump response might be made.

Responses to Overcalls

In responding to partner's simple overcall, the watchword is: Pay strict attention to the vulnerability conditions in which he overcalled. His hand is likely to be weaker if he is not vulnerable than if he is. His hand is likely to be even weaker if vulnerability is favourable.

In either case, partner's strength is strictly limited when he merely overcalls; with a very strong hand he would prefer to double. But this still leaves a wide range of values to be shown by the overcall. It may be made on quite a weak hand such as the ones shown on pages 82 to 84. And then again, it may be made on a fairly strong hand like the following:

♠ 8 2 ♥ K Q 8 7 6 3 ♦ A 10 ♣ K 6 3

With this hand, partner would overcall an opposing one-club bid with one heart—an overcall he would also make on a far weaker hand, particularly if not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents. This suggests that the overcaller's partner may have trouble in distinguishing between the cases in which the overcall is a strong one and the cases in which it is a weak one. But this problem is far more trouble on paper, or in theory, than it is in actual practice.

The thing that helps most is that the opponents will not trap over partner's overcall. There is too little to gain by trapping; since an overcall shows strictly limited strength it is not worth keeping the bidding open light for a partner who has merely overcalled. The opponents therefore cannot trap with any hope that the overcall will lead the defending side to a

OVERCALLS IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

dangerously high contract. Thus, the overcaller's partner can and should trust his opponents to a considerable extent. If the opponents make strong bids despite the overcall, partner probably had a borderline hand. If the opponents hasten to subside, partner probably had a fair hand—for an overcall. In any event it does not do the overcaller's partner any harm to give a raise, when he is able to do so, and sound out the situation. Take the previous example of an overcall, with the responding hand to it:

Neither side vulnerable. The East-West hands:

| WEST | EAST |
|---------------|------------|
| ♠ 8 2 | ♠ 10 6 5 3 |
| ♥ K Q 8 7 6 3 | ♥ A 10 4 |
| ♦ A 10 | ♦ K Q 8 2 |
| ♣ K 6 3 | ♣ 9 4 |

South opened with one club, West overcalled with one heart, and North passed. East might as well raise to two hearts. He has the full values for this raise; and nothing can possibly be lost by raising. In no circumstances are East-West going to buy the contract for one heart, unless their hands are so much stronger that they should be at game. Therefore, the exigencies of the competitive situation in duplicate bridge would force East to raise hearts sooner or later anyway.

After East has bid two hearts, West will make a free bid of three hearts whether South rebids or not, and East will raise to four hearts whether he is forced to do so over competitive bidding by North-South, or does so as warranted aggressive action based either upon West's free bid or upon the opponents' silence, it hardly matters which.¹

¹ Depending on the opponents' passes might seem like very unsound practice, and in fact it was long ago proved to be most unsound in rubber-bridge bidding. It is emphatically unsound in duplicate bridge, too, so far as the side that opens the bidding is concerned. Nevertheless, while not too much dependence should be put on it even by the overcalling side in duplicate, it is definitely worth paying attention to. The opponents, having opened the bidding, cannot afford to sit back with strong hands and let the other side get up to, say, three hearts and stop there. Re-entering the bidding at this level would be too dangerous. Therefore the opening side has a tendency to make their free responses and rebids when indicated by their cards, and their failure to do so is significant.

Raises of Overcalls

A free or competitive raise should be given to an overcall on a considerably weaker hand than even a free raise to an opening bid (page 74). The purpose of the overcall was to get into the bidding, possibly to make an eventual sacrifice. A fit with the overcaller's suit should be shown as soon as possible. This is especially so when not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents. The strength required for a free raise reaches even as low as the following case:

North-South vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | 2 ♥ |

East holds:

♠ 8 7 ♥ K 9 7 2 ♦ J 8 5 4 ♣ 9 3 2

Improving the Contract

When lacking a fit in partner's suit, a fairly light response should be made nevertheless when it improves the contract—that is, takes him from a minor to a major. If partner has overcalled a one-spade bid with two diamonds, especially in equal or unfavourable vulnerability circumstances (so that he may be depended upon for a sound overcall) it is proper to take him out into two hearts on a hand like this:

♠ 8 ♥ A J 10 7 6 ♦ J 7 2 ♣ J 8 6 5

No such take-out is made on a four-card suit, however; if partner could support a four-card heart suit he probably would have doubled instead of overcalling in the minor. Therefore on this hand, somewhat stronger in high cards, partner's overcall of two diamonds would merely be passed:

♠ 8 6 2 ♥ A Q 7 6 ♦ 7 2 ♣ Q 8 6 5

Rescuing, anathema to the rubber-bridge player, is far

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more widely practised in duplicate bridge. Suppose neither side is vulnerable and the bidding is:

| | | | |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 | 1 | Double | |

East would never dream of rescuing in a rubber-bridge game if his hand were something like this:

6
 A 5 2
 9 5 4 2
 Q 10 8 6 5

In the first place, West must have had some purpose in overcalling and some reasonable margin of safety when he overcalled. The East hand is not without value, with its ace of hearts, and to bid the clubs might be going into a contract which would prove to be very bad, whereas one spade is at least unlikely to go down more than three tricks.

In duplicate bridge, however, East should promptly bid two clubs on his hand. Here again it is partly a matter of trusting the opponents; North is calculating very closely when he doubles, and probably has reason to think his side can get their best score at one spade doubled. Getting a bottom by going down 700 or 900 at two clubs is no worse than getting a bottom by going down 300 or 500 at one spade. In duplicate bridge, West does not have the same reason to stick to a narrow margin of safety as in rubber bridge, because in duplicate bridge, West's incentive for overcalling is so much greater. Thus, by bidding two clubs East is gambling only one or two match-points as against the possibility that he will find a fit in clubs and gain four, five or more match-points which would be unobtainable at spades.

CHAPTER VIII

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

The requirements for all bids in any standard bidding system are based upon the safety factor. The system-maker calculates what you might lose by bidding and what you might lose by passing, and eventually arrives at some standard at which there is more to lose by passing than by bidding. In duplicate bridge, the requirements for practically every bid are shaded from that. It is so with opening bids, with responses, with overcalls and with take-out doubles. It is especially so with respect to any bid made to re-open the bidding when the opponents have stopped at a low contract.

There is nothing unusual about the following bidding sequence in a duplicate game:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|-------|---|
| Pass | 1  | Pass | 1  |
| Pass | 2  | Pass | Pass |
| 2  | | | |

Playing for total points, South's two-heart bid would be most inconsistent. He obviously was unable to open the bidding, and he obviously was unable to bid over one spade. And now he makes a two-heart bid, for what? To keep the opponents from making a measly two diamonds! Yet re-opening the bidding in such cases as this is an essential part of duplicate strategy.

This does not mean that one necessarily takes more chances in duplicate bridge. It is merely that one faces more risks in duplicate bridge, and must accordingly be more aggressive in his measures to combat those risks. In terms of match-points it is just as dangerous for South to pass two diamonds

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

and let the opponents make a part-score on average or inferior cards as there is risk of going down by bidding two hearts. The danger that East-West have stopped at two diamonds when they could make a game, is hardly even thought of. Such a thing happens so rarely that it would be a losing game to proceed on the assumption that it may have occurred this time.

The justification for South's two-heart bid is as follows: West made an opening bid, and North may have been unable to bid safely over that—he could not tell whether West's hand was a minimum or a maximum. East made a one-spade response, which also was very indefinite in nature—a one-over-one may range from a very weak to an exceedingly strong hand. Therefore, when West rebid two diamonds, North still could not bid safely—he could not tell but that East had all the outstanding strength. North's two passes, therefore, do not necessarily mean that North's hand is worthless.

The East-West bidding, however, is most revealing. West made a weak rebid of two diamonds. East was not strong enough to rebid, even to improve the minor-suit contract. East almost surely has less than two honour-tricks and perhaps has no more than one honour-trick. North-South between them probably have about as much strength as East-West. If North-South can find a suit in which they fit, they can probably make a part-score as easily as East-West can, and can get the plus score for themselves instead of letting East-West get it. In duplicate scoring, that is the most profound difference imaginable. And what does South risk with his two-heart bid? He risks the danger that North-South cannot find a suit in which they fit; and that East-West, with their obviously weak hands, will be able to double. This combination of circumstances is unlikely to occur. It is less of a danger than the danger of leaving the opponents in an uncontested two-diamond contract.

Trapping in Duplicate

Trapping is far more common in duplicate than in rubber

‘PROTECTION’

bridge. It is difficult to say whether players trap because they can depend on their partners to re-open the bidding or whether the partners re-open the bidding because there is so much likelihood that a trap pass has been made. It does not matter much which is the cause and which the effect. The fact remains that there are so many hands a defender may hold on which it is better tactics to pass an opposing opening bid than to take action over it that the other defender should keep in mind the possibility that such a pass has been made. When a player re-opens the bidding on a weak hand (one which would not ordinarily justify it) he is said to be ‘protecting’ his partner.

This matter of protection can be much overdone. It is wrong to assume that your partner has made a trap pass. Rather, you should assume that he was simply not strong enough to bid, for one reason or another. This does not prevent your crediting him with the minimum he must have if the opponents’ bidding is intelligent. Do not count on him for more.

‘Protection’

The following is the situation in which re-opening is most nearly automatic and is done on the weakest hands:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | Pass | ? |

It is obvious that North has little or nothing, but this does not necessarily mean that West had a powerful hand. South may have nearly a two-bid. It is a losing game for East to protect by doubling, or by overcalling with one spade, on a hopeless hand like this:

♠ Q 6 5 3 ♥ 7 ♦ Q 8 5 3 ♣ J 8 6 4

However, a trick and a half or thereabouts is sufficient to re-open in such a situation, and the playing strength of the hand may range downward from fair to quite weak. East, in the above bidding situation, would re-open unhesitatingly on this hand:

♠ Q 7 3 ♥ 9 2 ♦ K J 6 4 3 ♣ K 7 6

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

Such a hand, far too weak for a two-diamond overcall in any other circumstances, warrants that bid in re-opening. With a higher-ranking suit than the opponents, so that they may be outbid for a part-score if the strength is evenly distributed between the two sides, an even weaker hand will suffice; an opponent's one-heart bid having been passed out, you would re-open fourth hand with one spade on the following cards:

♠ Q 10 7 6 2 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ A 10 3 ♣ 8 6

Before re-opening the bidding on such a weak hand as this, it is best to pause and ask yourself: 'Are the opponents in their best contract?' Even if you have only $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or so, you need not greatly fear that they have passed out a game. You must, however, fear that there is some better part-score contract which they can reach if you re-open the bidding and give them the opportunity—some other part-score contract at which they can make more tricks, or play in a major instead of in a minor, and consequently score more points. Suppose the bidding is:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♦ | Pass | Pass | |

and East holds:

♠ J 6 ♥ 8 5 ♦ Q 9 7 3 ♣ A J 9 8 5

Unless West is trapping (which is unlikely, as will be shown later) it is improbable that East-West can make more than a low part-score, if that. East cannot support either major suit, even if West can bid one of them. East has fairly good defensive strength in diamonds, if South plays the hand there. But if East re-opens the bidding, it may give South an opportunity to make a take-out double and thus find a fit with North in one of the major suits, whereupon North-South may score 110 or 140 points in a major suit, whereas they could have scored only 90 or 110 points in diamonds. Thus it behoves East to pass, since there is greater likelihood that he will improve the opponents' score by re-opening than

RE-OPENING WITH ONE NO-TRUMP

that he will improve the score of his own side. Even when the opponents are already in a major suit:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1♠ | Pass | Pass | |

If East holds:

♠ QJ 6 3 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 6 3 ♣ A 10 8 7 5

he will be wise to pass. South may not do too well in spades. But North may have passed a good heart or diamond suit, which he can bid if East re-opens (see a discussion of such hands on page 67), such a hand for example as:

♠ 6 5 ♥ 10 5 4 ♦ K J 10 7 6 3 ♣ 9 2

So if East re-opens the bidding he may find his opponents scoring an easy 130 points in diamonds when they might have been hard put to get 80 points in spades.

Re-opening with One No-Trump

It is a good general principle, subject to not many more exceptions than most bridge principles are, that with a balanced hand and part of your essential strength in the opponents' suit you should not re-open the bidding unless you can bid one no-trump. Otherwise you may find yourself rescuing your opponents instead of helping yourself.

A no-trump bid made to re-open the bidding is shaded as all re-opening bids are, but this does not mean it is made on so weak a hand as a re-opening overcall.¹ It need not be up to the standard of an opening one no-trump bid: it need not even be as strong as the hand on which you would overcall with one no-trump if the opening bid had not been passed out. Nevertheless a no-trump bid in re-opening should show about two honour-tricks, well distributed and with five or six honour-cards at the very least. No-trump is a contract it is

¹ Some players prefer to use a re-opening no-trump overcall as quite a weak bid, on the theory that this best serves the principle of economy of bids—that is, that one no-trump is the lowest re-opening bid you can make if, for example, the opposing bid is one spade. I do not agree with this theory for various reasons which are brought out in the text.

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good to play in duplicate, and when you bid no-trump you should be prepared to play it. If the bidding goes:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♥ | Pass | Pass | |

and East holds:

♠ 10 6 5 ♥ A K 7 ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ 9 7 6 5

he does not have a no-trump overcall; he does not have any overcall. He should pass.

The same two honour-tricks can be so distributed that they make very good hands and a suitable no-trump overcall of a passed-out one-heart bid.

♠ A 10 3 ♥ QJ 7 4 ♦ K 6 ♣ 10 9 5 4

Re-opening With a Take-Out Double

About the same type and strength of hand that you need for a no-trump overcall, with different distribution of strength, justifies a take-out double in re-opening the bidding. The take-out double is much used in re-opening; in many respects it is the safest and most effective bid for this purpose. At times it is shaded down to less than two tricks, if the distribution and intermediates are ideal for the purpose. For example, if a one-spade bid has been passed round to you it would be proper to double with this hand:

♠ 10 4 ♥ K 10 5 3 ♦ A 10 9 7 ♣ Q 8 5

The take-out double, like the no-trump overcall, deserves some degree of respect at all times. Not too many liberties should be taken with it; it may be shaded, but should not be shaded too far. To double simply because you have 4-4-4-1 distribution and 'nothing else to bid' is to court disaster. There was a time when players re-opened by doubling on a hand like this:

♠ 4 ♥ Q 8 6 5 ♦ K 8 4 3 ♣ 10 8 6 3

Such doubles have been generally abandoned for the very good reason that they did not work out. One unhappy

CASES IN WHICH TO EXPECT TRAPPING

consequence of such doubles was that they too often got the re-opening side overboard. Another and equally sad consequence of such doubles was that they usually presented the opponents with a top when partner happened to be trapping and relished the opportunity to make a penalty pass. Because of the possibility that partner trapped over the opening bid, a take-out double in re-opening, while it does not invite a pass, does permit one and the doubler should be prepared for it.

It is not often possible to know when partner is trapping. It is not necessary to know, for it is better to let him take care of himself, as in cases when he is psyching, or bidding on an unbiddable suit. If you try to divine the cases when partner is trapping, it will lead you to re-open the bidding when your own strength does not warrant it, and experience has shown that such tactics do not pay. Even if you are right, and partner is strong, he will not know how weak you are, and is likely to overbid. Furthermore, when you are very weak it is usually just as well to let the opponents play the hand, since in such cases whichever side plays it is likely to be set and get a minus score.

Cases in Which to Expect Trapping

It is often possible, however, to judge from your hand and the bidding that partner probably is not trapping. There are only certain well-defined cases in which an intelligent partner will trap.

For one thing, one traps over an opponent's opening bid when he has strength in the opponents' suit, but never with weakness in the opponents' suit. Partner may pass an opposing one-spade bid with a hand like this:

♠ K J 9 5 ♥ K 10 3 ♦ A K 8 6 ♣ 4 2

or even with a hand like this:

♠ K 10 3 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ A K 8 6 ♣ 4 2

but never with a hand like this:

♠ 4 2 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ A K 8 6 ♣ K 10 3

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

On such a hand, partner would double.

Therefore, when the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | Pass | |

and East holds something like ♠ QJ x x, he has little reason to suspect a trap pass by West, considering that South has bid spades and East has so much spade strength, West *may* have enough in spades to trap but it would be unusual. And if West does have spade strength, then North probably has a singleton and North-South can rescue themselves in some other suit, thus avoiding a doubled spade contract.

It is also highly unlikely that partner will be trapping when your side is vulnerable and the opponents are not. The object of a trap pass is an eventual penalty double of the opponents. When you are vulnerable against non-vulnerable opponents, your partner would rather try for game on a strong hand than wait in the hope of making a penalty double.

When Partner is Probably not Trapping

When partner has passed an opposing bid which is neither forcing nor strength-showing (that is, a bid which neither forces, nor invites, nor urges a response) it becomes most unlikely that he is trapping. To return to the bidding situation stated at the beginning of this chapter:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♠ |
| Pass | 2 ♦ | Pass | Pass |
| 2 ♥ | | | |

North might have passed the one-diamond bid as a trap, but it would be dangerous for him still to remain silent on a strong hand when West bids two diamonds. The two-diamond bid shows that West is not very strong but that he is able to play in his diamond suit, and East is all too likely to pass. Then if South is too weak to re-open the bidding, North will have gone to sleep with his strong hand. Thus, over such a rebid of two diamonds even a trapper must come out in the

BALANCE-OF-POWER THEORY

open. In these circumstances, when South re-opens with his two-heart overcall, he should not depend on North for more than the normal balance of missing strength under the rule of eight. The rule of eight (see *Contract Bridge Complete*) tells us that the four hands at the table have eight or eight and one-half honour-tricks among them. West for his opening bid needed about three honour-tricks, and East for his response about one, giving them four honour-tricks together; but since West made a possibly minimum rebid and East did not bid again, that is probably all they had. That leaves about four honour-tricks to be divided between North and South, and whatever South does not have, North should have. Thus, South may re-open the bidding by bidding two hearts on a hand like this:

♠ A 6 ♥ Q 10 5 3 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ K J 6 3

and expect to find about two honour-tricks in North's hand, giving his side (barring a misfit) a reasonable chance for a part-score. South might go so far as to re-open if he has only Q-J-x-x in clubs instead of K-J-x-x. But below that he should not go, since he can assume from the bidding that North probably was not trapping. South should fear either that East-West have undisclosed honour strength which will permit them to beat any North-South contract, or that North has about three honour-tricks in a hand of exceedingly poor distribution, so that North-South will be far better off playing in defence against two diamonds than trying to make a contract of their own.

Balance-of-Power Theory

This same balance-of-power theory is the justification for 're-opening' doubles of one no-trump responses which have been passed out, as in the following instance:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 N-T | Pass |
| Pass | Double | | |

Since North showed a minimum hand by responding one no-trump, and South showed a limited hand by passing it,

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

West can assume that East-West hold about half the honour-tricks in the pack. This fact alone does not justify the double, however. To defend against one no-trump, doubled, with reasonable expectancy of beating it, the combined hands of East-West require roughly the following characteristics:

1. About half the honour-tricks in the pack—that is, 4 to 4½ honour-tricks—which, with the advantage of the opening lead, should give the defenders at least the odd trick.

2. At least as many, and preferably more, honour cards than the bidding side has.

3. The defensive strength more or less evenly divided between the two hands of the defenders. This assures them against being thrown in repeatedly and forced to make losing leads. If one partner has ½ honour-trick and the other 3½ or 4, they do not have as good a chance of beating one trump as if they each had two honour-tricks.

To return to West's problem, the best hand on which to make it is therefore a balanced one with about two honour-tricks and about five honour cards, preferably more. For example, West might double with:

♠ A 8 3 ♥ K 7 4 3 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ 10 9 6

whereas he would not dream of doubling on

♠ 9 8 3 ♥ A K 6 ♦ 10 8 6 2 ♣ 8 5 2

—a good, sound pass of the one no-trump contract.

Leaving in a Double of One No-Trump

Any such re-opening double of a one no-trump bid is a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. The doubler's partner will pass with distributed strength and fairly well-balanced distribution. With a weak hand he will try to take out with a suit, even though he knows that the doubler probably has considerably more than the two honour-trick minimum for his double; for one of the stated essentials for these close doubles is that the strength be fairly evenly divided between the partnership hands. Finally, when the doubler's partner feels that

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one no-trump can probably be beaten, but he has a five-card or longer suit he might bid, his decision between a bid and a pass will depend on the vulnerability.

Against vulnerable opponents he will pass for a one trick set, 200 points, whereas against non-vulnerable opponents he will prefer to bid two diamonds on a hand like this:

♠ Q 9 7 ♥ 5 ♦ A 10 8 5 3 ♣ K 9 7 3

It seems probable that three diamonds can be made for a score of 110, whereas one no-trump might go down only 100; and the diamond contract is far safer, because if three diamonds cannot be made at least two diamonds probably can be, for a plus-score, whereas letting the opponents make one no-trump doubled will be not only a minus score, but a near bottom at best.

The reader is cautioned to remember that the situation is far different when an opening bid of one no-trump is passed around.

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 N-T | Pass | Pass | |

In this case South has shown a strong hand of ideal no-trump distribution. North's pass means only that he does not think three no-trump can be made, but he may feel confident that one no-trump or even two no-trump are safe enough. East cannot depend on his partner for anything. For East to double exposes himself to the risk of redoubles, and to overcall exposes him to a quick and profitable double by either South or North. No shaded re-opening bids are made in this situation.

Making Allowances

The success of the light re-opening bid depends upon intelligent teamwork. The re-opener's partner must not forget the pressure under which the re-opening bid was made, partly because of the exigencies of match-point scoring which forces an opposing part-score to be contested whenever possible, and partly because of the re-opener's anxiety to protect a possible trap pass. If his partner has actually made a trap

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

pass, he must realize that the re-opening bid was very likely made with that very possibility in mind, and he should not proceed in mad leaps to a game contract without stopping to consider the possible weakness of his partner's hand. After bidding like this:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | Pass | 1 ♠ |
| Pass | | | |

it would be insane for West to plunge into two or three no-trump on such a hand as

♠ K 6 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ K 10 8 4 ♣ A 9 7 2

One no-trump is quite sufficient; a glance at the example of a one-spade re-opening bid, shown on page 107, will suffice to show why. After West bids one no-trump, East may bid again if by chance he has full values and was not stretching a point to make his spade bid.

The minimum strength guaranteed by the re-opening bidder can be gauged principally from the circumstances in which he re-opened. His own previous passes, and the passes of his partner, can be most enlightening.

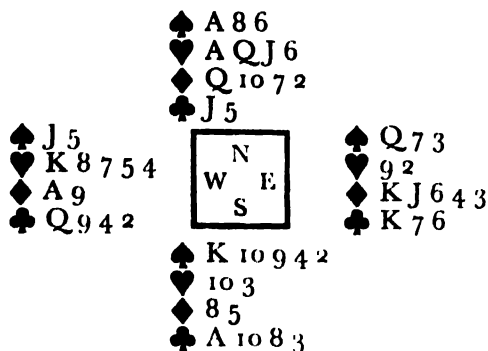
Both sides vulnerable.

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 1 ♠ | Pass | Pass | 2 ♦ |

East can be depended upon for a fairly good hand with a sound two-diamond overcall. He is not re-opening the bidding in this situation on general principles. For one thing, West passed originally and passed again over one spade, hence he is unlikely to have any considerable values that need 'protection'. For another thing, North-South have not shown any decided weakness except that their bidding has expressed the opinion that they have no game. If East were to re-open in such a situation on the type of hand shown on page 107, he might find himself trapped. Here is a complete deal:

WHEN A ONE-OVER-ONE IS PASSED



North opens with a third-hand heart, South responds one spade. Because South passed originally, North decided that no game could be made, and that one spade was as good a place as any to play for a part-score. Therefore there was no reason for North to bid again over the one-spade response; but at spades North-South could make only a part-score, 140 points at best, while if East decided to re-open the bidding he could be set at least 200 points.

It follows that East would need a considerably stronger hand to re-open in such circumstances, and if East does re-open and the bidding continues, West will know approximately how strong a hand he will need to raise or to make a bid on his own.

When a One-Over-One is Passed

The situation is entirely different in a case like the following:

North-South vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 1 ♠ | Pass | Pass | Double |

West has made no denial of strength by passing originally. He had every reason to expect the one-club bid, and after it the one-spade bid, to be kept open by North if North could possibly find a bid. Thus West would have been reasonably

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING

safe in passing a very strong hand on both occasions. In view of this, East is under considerable pressure to re-open the bidding, just in case West has passed such a hand as the following:

♠ A J 7 ♥ 7 5 ♦ Q 7 6 3 ♣ A K J 6

So if West does hold such a hand, and East does re-open, West need not go plunging into three no-trump. He might better content himself with a bid of only two no-trump until he finds out just how attenuated East's re-opening bid might have been.

Preparing for a Penalty Pass

Whenever one re-opens the bidding with a take-out double, he must consider the possibility that his partner will make a penalty pass. It would be going too far to say that he must be prepared for such a pass, but he should not be surprised by it. Therefore, with a very strong hand and in a situation in which it is undesirable to have partner pass, the re-opening bid can best be a cue-bid, even if it contains one or two losers in the opponents' suit. For example, in the following bidding situation, with both sides vulnerable:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♥ | Pass | Pass | |

East should not double, nor should he merely overcall, with a hand like:

♠ A K J 6 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A K Q 9 7 6 ♣ Q

The proper bid is a cue-bid of two hearts. There is too much likelihood of being able to make a vulnerable game to risk a pass by partner which might result in only a 200 or 500-point penalty. A hand which is not quite such a powerhouse, but which is sufficiently strong to give some hope of game, may be shown by a jump overcall:

Neither side vulnerable

The bidding:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♥ | Pass | Pass | |

RE-OPENING AFTER A ONE NO-TRUMP BID

East, holding

1. ♠ K Q J 9 7 3 ♥ 5 ♦ A Q 10 5 ♣ 7 4
would bid two spades. Holding

2. ♠ A 6 ♥ J 5 ♦ 7 4 2 ♣ A K Q 10 7 4
he would bid three clubs.

In neither case would East relish a penalty pass if he doubled one heart, but in neither case would he wish to make a simple overcall, which in view of the situation might be read as a very weak bid and passed out all round. The jump overcall in this situation shows a good, strong overcall which would have been made regardless of the progress of the bidding.

Re-opening after a One No-Trump Bid

The considerations are different when two passes have followed an opening bid of one no-trump. Fourth hand cannot often have any hope of game against the strength shown by the no-trump hand. He may re-open on slightly less than he would wish in rubber bridge. An essential requirement of his re-opening bid, however, is a suit that will go it pretty much alone. For example:

♠ 6 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ K J 10 9 8 6 ♣ Q J 4

South bid one no-trump, West and North passed, and East holds the hand shown. He should bid two diamonds in a duplicate game. He might reasonably prefer to pass it in rubber bridge.

With a hand of approximately the same total strength, but distributed so that there is no very strong suit, it is wiser to pass or, if the honour-trick content of the hand warrants, to re-open with a double.

The re-opening situations in this chapter have dealt with cases in which the re-opening bid must be made more or less blind—that is, nothing has been heard from the re-opener's partner. There are many more re-opening situations which occur when both sides have previously been in the bidding. These cases properly come under 'Choice of Contracts' and will be covered in Chapter X.

CHAPTER IX

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

The mathematical basis for bidding games in duplicate bridge has already been analysed (page 37). It is in no way based on the number of total points you can score by taking a slight additional gamble to reach a doubtful game contract. Even if this would net you some hundreds of thousands of additional points over the course of time, it would not necessarily improve your score in match-points. Every deal in duplicate bridge stands alone and none has any effect on any other.

Nevertheless, a reasonable degree of aggressiveness usually pays off. Later I will discuss the general advisability of trying to play safe for a sure plus score in any close question. This does not apply in the case of uncontested bidding for game, that is, when the opponents do not enter the bidding (or, a similar situation, when your side has a sufficient preponderance of the high cards so that the opponents do not seriously contest your fixing of the final contract). In such cases to play for a sure plus score is a false philosophy.

The following is a typical 50-50 hand:

| EAST | WEST |
|-------------|--------------|
| ♠ A J 9 5 4 | ♠ Q 10 6 3 2 |
| ♥ K 7 3 | ♥ A 8 2 |
| ♦ 7 5 | ♦ 8 3 |
| ♣ A J 7 | ♣ K Q 6 |

East-West must lose two diamond tricks and one heart trick; there is no apparent chance or place for declarer to park any of these losers. Whether East-West can make four spades or three spades will therefore depend on the winning or losing of

ONE TIME WHEN VULNERABILITY IS DISREGARDED

the finesse against the spade king. Since the finesse is equally likely to win or lose, East-West are equally likely to get the maximum score on the hand by bidding four or stopping at three, assuming that there is no adverse bidding of any sort to help them place the outstanding high cards. The question is, should they as a rule bid the game or should they as a rule stop at three?

Stopping at three will give them an unbroken series of plus scores. When the finesse loses they will be plus 140; when the finesse wins they will be plus 170. Bidding four spades invariably will give them some plus scores and some minus scores. When the finesse wins they will be plus 420 or plus 620, depending on vulnerability. When the finesse loses they will be minus 50 or minus 100, or, if they are unfortunate enough to be doubled, minus 100 or minus 200, again depending on vulnerability.

One Time When Vulnerability is Disregarded

Vulnerability does not enter into the decision; the one time in all of duplicate bidding when vulnerability does not matter is when you are bidding uncontestedly for a game or slam. Total points do not matter; the objective is to score as many points as possible on the deal in question, without thought of what you could score on the average deal of that sort.

Yet the game contract, which is a 50-50 shot in the play of the cards, is not a 50-50 shot in the bidding. East-West should definitely and regularly bid the game. There are several reasons for this.

Many players carry their rubber-bridge bidding habits with them to the duplicate table, and are as aggressive in bidding for game in one form of play as in the other. By bidding 50-50 games you will usually be with the majority. That means you will get a few match-points even if you have guessed wrong and go down at a game contract, because other pairs will have done the same.

Another thing is that you cannot always estimate the strength of the combined hands closely enough to know that

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

it will be exactly 50-50; the distribution may be such that an opponent may make a mistake which will give you the higher contract. Since the cards themselves give you an even chance for game, any added hope, no matter how slight, makes the game contract a better-than-even chance that justifies bidding it.

And you do not know what has happened at other tables. Some unwise opponent may have put in an overcall, been doubled, and gone down 200 or 300 points. No part-score will equal such a result; your game contract, if you make it, will beat such a result. It may even happen that if you bid the game boldly some unwise opponent will decide to 'sacrifice' against you even when you could not make the game if left in it.

Bid a 50-50 Game

It may be stated as a general principle that in a 50-50 case you choose the course of action which if successful will give you the higher total-point score.

Accurate bidding for game in duplicate bridge is best achieved by following the principle that every rebid should be chosen to show the strength of the hand, even at the expense of some distributional information which might be given on the same bid. Suppose South holds:

♠ K Q J 9 4 ♥ K J 6 ♦ Q 5 ♣ A J 6

and the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♦ | Pass |

South's rebid should be two no-trump, not two spades. South has a fine rebiddable spade suit which he would like to show, but to bid two spades would not accurately tell how strong his hand is, while he is not quite good enough for a jump to three spades. The two no-trump rebid, which always shows a strong hand, paints a better picture of his general strength, and this is always preferable to painting a good picture of specific strength.

WHEN TO BE CONSERVATIVE

The two no-trump rebid in this situation serves a double purpose in a duplicate game. First, as previously pointed out, it shows the strength of the hand. Second, it opens the way to a final no-trump contract which, when all other things are equal, is always the best contract because it produces a higher trick score. It might be said that the two no-trump rebid on this type of hand serves a triple purpose, because it permits North to recognize a two-spade bid as showing a distinctly weaker hand, and in a close question North can safely pass a two-spade bid.

The responding hand should also be careful, on his first rebid, to paint the strength of his hand as accurately as possible. Take another bidding situation in which North holds:

♠ 6 3 ♥ QJ 9 7 6 3 ♦ Q 5 ♣ A 10 3

and the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 1 N-T | Pass | | |

North must bid three hearts, not two. This shows that his hand is strong and that he wants a game; at the same time, it permits him to make a simple two-heart rebid on a hand like this:

♠ 6 3 ♥ QJ 9 7 6 3 ♦ 7 5 ♣ K 10 3

and know that South will not strain to make another bid in the fear that otherwise a game may be missed. With such a hand North is anxious to play in hearts, but realizes that two hearts may be the limit of the combined trick-taking powers.

When to be Conservative

Underbidding is very costly in duplicate bridge. No such practice is recommended here. What is recommended is conservatism, on the part of both partners, in situations which are definitely close—situations in which there is a close question in your mind between a pass and making another bid. The usual course in rubber bridge might be to choose the bid

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

in such situations; the usual course in duplicate is to choose the pass.

| WEST | EAST |
|--------------|--------------|
| ♠ 8 5 2 | ♠ K Q J 10 6 |
| ♥ Q 4 3 | ♥ A 8 2 |
| ♦ A 6 | ♦ Q 10 4 |
| ♣ K J 10 7 5 | ♣ 9 3 |

In rubber bridge, when East has opened the bidding fourth hand and by rebidding has confirmed possession of a genuine opening bid, West might jump to four spades over two; in duplicate, West takes into account the possibility of a light fourth-hand opening bid, and a two-spade rebid based on East's preference for a spade contract if possible. Hence West bids only three spades. In rubber bridge, East would quickly bid four spades over three; even though the odds may be slightly against making it, he wants to be there. In duplicate, East passes three spades because he knows that in view of West's original pass the game contract is more likely to go down than to be made.

Partner is given leeway for light opening third and fourth hand bids in duplicate, but it is the saddest and silliest of all bridge errors to assume that he has a weak or shaded hand simply because he opens in third or fourth position. A player is every bit as likely to hold a good hand in one position as in another. A really light fourth-hand bid is made on a hand like this:

♠ A 10 7 6 ♥ J 4 ♦ J 9 6 3 ♣ A J 4

and the holder of this hand, having bid one spade fourth hand, will pass any response of two in a suit (which is not forcing, because his partner passed originally). Therefore any rebid by fourth hand shows some degree of soundness to his opening bid, and his partner should take the duplicate-bridge conditions into consideration only to the extent of very slight conservatism. A hand which would clearly warrant another bid in rubber bridge clearly warrants another bid in duplicate.

INFORMATION FROM THE OPPONENTS

Giving Partner Leeway

When the opponents can enter the bidding at all, even though they have quickly withdrawn, partner must be given some leeway for having made a light free bid or having given a light raise. In a situation like this:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 2 ♣ | 2 ♥ | Pass |

if South holds:

♠ A 7 ♥ A Q 8 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 3 ♣ 7 4

he would quickly bid four hearts in rubber bridge. In duplicate, he bids only three hearts. If North has shaded his raise to the extreme shown on page 74, North will pass this. If North really had something resembling a free raise, he will bid four. Only to this extent is the bidding shaded. South does not leap to the conclusion that just because North will sometimes give a free raise on scant values, he has done it this time. With a better hand, something like this:

♠ K Q 6 ♥ K Q 10 9 6 3 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ 2

South would jump to four hearts without giving the matter a second thought, even though opposite the lightest possible hand North might have for a free raise, the play for four hearts might not be 100 per cent.

Information from the Opponents

When the opponents have entered the bidding it often gives you an advantage in the play of close game contracts. This advantage should be taken into consideration in bidding. Most close game contracts require accurate play, and accurate play requires some degree of card reading. Opposing bidding permits you to place the outstanding cards more easily than you could if the opponents had not bid. For example:

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

Neither side vulnerable. East holds:

♠ 6 3 ♥ K 8 6 3 2 ♦ K 7 5 ♣ K 6 5

The bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass | |

East, with a minimum hand for his two-heart response, would tend to pass three hearts. The odds are probably against making a game, and in duplicate bridge this makes it unwise to bid more (in rubber bridge, East would bid four hearts). If with the same hand and the same East-West bidding North had overcalled, as in this sequence:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass | |

East would bid four hearts. North's diamond overcall practically places the ace of diamonds under the king. In case there are finesses in hearts or clubs, the knowledge that North could bid, and that North had length in diamonds, may help East as declarer in planning his play of the hand. Finally, the fact that an opponent could enter the bidding at all suggests that in some other case East-West may have been able to double and to collect a penalty which would be better than an East-West part-score of three hearts bid and three or four hearts made, whereas a four-heart game will beat those penalty scores.

When an opponent has opened the bidding, especially when the opening bid has been passed out by the opener's partner, an even greater fund of information is available. An opening bid places high cards more specifically than an overcall does, and a pass of an opening bid, or a weak response to an opening bid, is a denial of strength which often proves just as valuable in card reading as an affirmation of strength. The following case is an example:

Both sides vulnerable. East holds:

♠ A 8 7 ♥ 10 7 6 ♦ K J 6 ♣ J 10 4 3

CONSERVATISM IN SLAM BIDDING

and the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | Pass | 1 N-T |
| Pass | 2 N-T | Pass | |

Though East has a minimum no-trump overcall, even in re-opening circumstances, he should bid three no-trump. It is unlikely that South can ever get his partner in to lead through the diamonds, and whatever finesses are required can be taken through South, who is placed with all the opposing high-card strength, toward West's strong hand. East's bid is not a question of refusing to 'hang at two no-trump', which is anathema to rubber-bridge players. Two no-trump is not a bad contract in duplicate. It is simply that the card-reading advantages which should be expected to develop during the play can be anticipated in the bidding.

Conservatism in Slam Bidding

The theory of slam bidding in duplicate bridge merely carries the theory of game bidding a bit farther. The watch-word is conservatism even more than it is when deciding whether to bid or not to bid a close game. Your appraisal of the field in which you are playing will of course affect your decision (see page 136) but in any field from the one you find in a duplicate game in a small-town club to the experts who play in national championships, there is hardly any such thing as a slam so clear that 'everyone' will bid it. Even if you miss a laydown slam you will have company. If there is a close slam and you fail to reach, even if it proves that you can make it you will find that the majority of the other pairs have missed it too, and you will wind up with quite a few match-points. But if you bid a close slam and cannot make it, your minus score will land you very near to bottom. As a general rule, it is not good policy to risk getting a bottom when you can be fairly sure of an average score by some other course of action.

By a 'doubtful' slam is meant one which apparently depends upon winning a finesse, or upon finding partner with

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

exactly the right cards to fit in for slam-going solidity, or perhaps to find partner with a bit more than he has promised on his previous bidding. South's problem in the following example is typical:

South holds:

♠ A 6 ♥ A K Q 7 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ K J 10 5

and the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 2 ♦ | Pass |
| 3 ♣ | Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass |
| 3 ♠ | Pass | 4 ♥ | Pass |

Now South bids four no-trump, because if he can find out (using either the Culbertson or the Blackwood Convention) that his partner has two aces, the slam should be worth bidding. North responds five diamonds, showing an ace in either system.¹

North can be assumed to hold a hand like this:

♠ 7 3 ♥ J 8 5 2 ♦ A Q 8 5 2 ♣ 9 3

This picture of North's hand comes from a reading of his previous bids. When he returned to hearts for the second time, though that suit had not been rebid, he showed that he probably had four hearts; he could not have held three strong hearts because South had all the top heart honours. If North, with his four hearts, had held a weaker hand he would have contented himself with an immediate single raise in hearts, instead of first showing his diamond suit. But if North had a much stronger hand he would have jumped to four hearts over three clubs. Merely depending upon North for his normal holding on the bidding, South must be prepared to risk a club guess for the slam.

In rubber bridge South would bid the slam, because a 50-50 shot is good enough when any number of fortuitous circumstances might put the slam on ice—a club lead, for example, or a six-card diamond suit in North's hand, or any

¹ In the Culbertson 4-5 No-trump Convention five clubs, the lowest bid suit, would be the sign-off to deny an ace.

‘PERCENTAGE’ SLAMS

one of the fitting cards to solidify the spade or club suits. But the fact remains that South will probably have to finesse for a slam contract, and in duplicate bridge this is not enough. He should bid only five hearts.

It should be remembered, however, that a contract of five in a major suit is one of the worst imaginable in duplicate bridge (page 151) and unless it appears that five-odd will be certain and a slam is a fine prospect, one should beware of passing the game level.

‘Percentage’ Slams

A slam in duplicate bridge does not have to be a sure thing; far from it. When the percentage is heavily in favour of a slam contract’s being made, it should be bid. Failure to bid it will result in a bad score more often than not. The bidding of the following hand is typical, and the result is almost equally typical:

Both sides vulnerable; East dealer. South’s hand:

♠ 5 ♥ — ♦ K Q 7 5 2 ♣ K Q J 8 7 5 3

The bidding:

| EAST | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 ♥ | 2 ♣ | Pass | 3 N-T |
| Pass | 6 ♣ | | |

North has made a strong bid, over a simple overcall, and must have considerable high-card strength including at least one ace and probably two. If North has two aces, and neither of them is the heart ace, the slam will be cold. If North has two aces including the ace of hearts, it is possible that the defenders could cash two other aces and defeat the contract immediately; but in view of East’s opening heart bid, the likely opening lead is a heart and South will be able to ruff it, getting an advantage in timing. Finally, if a heart is opened there is some chance that the contract will be made even if North has only one ace, and though this may be a bare possibility, it adds to the percentage. All these possibilities put together make it more likely that South will fulfil a

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

slam contract than that he will go down, and in such circumstances the slam should be bid. In a case of this sort, it should be bid immediately, since a cue-bid in hearts, or the showing of a two-suiter by South, may scare West away from the heart opening which is most advantageous to South.¹

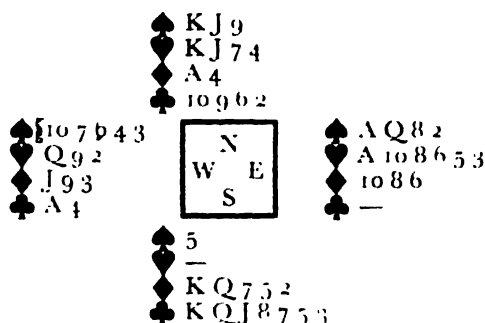
Generally speaking, there is a percentage in bidding a slam when it is partner who has done the strong bidding and when you hold cards that he must obviously be worried about. Suppose the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 ♥ | Pass | 3 ♣ | Pass |
| 3 ♥ | Pass | 5 ♥ | Pass |

If South holds:

♠ 10 6 2 ♥ A K 7 ♦ A 8 6 4 2 ♣ 5 3

he should bid six hearts. Conservatism is the rule in match-point bidding, and contracts of five in a major suit are assiduously avoided. So when partner is both bullish and willing to risk the dangerous five-heart contract, when holding neither



West opened a low heart, dummy's jack drew East's ace, and South was able to trump, lead to the ace of diamonds, and discard his losing spade on the king of hearts before leading clubs and giving up the only trick he lost. The opening lead was a poor one, of course, and West's ideal lead would have been the ace of trumps (to survey the dummy), in view of his partner's opening bid; but almost none of the masters rose to the occasion.

¹ The majority of players in a masters' pair tournament not only bid six clubs on this deal, but made it. The complete deal:

LAYDOWN SLAMS—NO-TRUMP PREFERENCE

the ace nor king of trumps, the addition of those two cards cannot fail to give him what he needs for a slam. In bidding five he has definitely counted on the loss of one of them.

Similarly, the barest minimum hand is worth an acceptance of partner's slam invitation if it contains three aces. Of course, most players use some conventional ace-showing bid which permits partner to ascertain the number of aces held in the combined hands.

Laydown Slams—No-Trump Preference

We come at last to the sure-thing, or laydown slam. When it is possible to ascertain from the bidding that the combined hands are almost sure to make a slam, the slam must be bid. Failure to bid it will result in a bad score; you will find that it will be generally bid around the room. Laydown slams are not particularly rare and they are not particularly hard to bid. They can be reached by normal bidding methods. The principal problem they pose in duplicate-bridge is the choice of suits in which to play the slam.

All other things being equal, the preference in duplicate bridge for a no-trump contract, and after that for a major-suit contract if available, goes without saying. However, when you decide to bid a close, doubtful or percentage slam, reaching the slam and making it will be enough. Not only should you avoid the slightest degree of risk for the added score of a no-trump contract in such cases; you should select the safest suit and play the hand there, whether the suit is a minor or a major. Making the slam will probably give you 75 per cent of the available match-points; it is unwise to risk losing 75 per cent (which would probably happen if you bid the slam in the wrong suit and went down) in order to add two or three additional match-points to what is already a good score. In the case of a laydown slam, however, you should always and consciously consider the possibility of a no-trump slam before you bid the slam in a suit.

My reason for cautioning you to think 'consciously' of the no-trump possibilities is this: When duplicate players bid and

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

make twelve tricks in clubs, and find themselves with a mediocre score because the same twelve tricks were available at no-trump, the error is usually accountable to sheer absent-mindedness. Players have carried too many automatic bidding methods from the rubber-bridge table into the duplicate game, and they do not even consider no-trump when the combined hands so obviously contain an excellent trump suit. The remedy for this failing is always to count the controls as well as the tricks and then decide where the slam is to be played.

| WEST | EAST |
|-------------|-------------|
| ♠ A K Q 6 4 | ♠ 9 8 7 5 3 |
| ♥ A 6 | ♥ K 9 8 |
| ♦ K 7 5 | ♦ A 2 |
| ♣ A J 10 | ♣ K 8 3 |

The situation is the same in spades as in no-trump. However, East-West will often get to six spades because the bidding will go somewhat as follows:

| WEST | EAST |
|------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 3 ♠ |
| 4 ♣ | 4 ♦ |
| 6 ♠ | |

The presence of a magnificent fit in spades, plus the fact that West is blinded by the power of his spade suit, will often keep him from even thinking of no-trump. However, realization of the number of top trick winners that East must have (which can be turned to absolute assurance if West uses an ace-showing convention and learns that East has one ace and two kings), should lead him to the six no-trump contract which is a tie for top on the board.

It must be noted that while there is a finesse for a grand slam at spades, with the added advantage that no finesse will be necessary if North happens to open a club, East-West should not reach a grand slam. Grand slams in duplicate bridge should be the surest of all sure-thing bids. A small slam, especially in no-trump, is enough to earn a good score. Bidding a grand slam risks at least five times as many match-points as it stands to gain.

WHEN A NO-TRUMP SLAM IS SAFEST

When a No-Trump Slam is Safest

Sometimes the no-trump slam is actually safer than the suit slam. In the example shown on this page, the East-West hands were just as likely to make twelve tricks at no-trump as at spades, and were less likely to lose two tricks because at spades there is the possibility of a club ruff due to a void in clubs, something which could not happen at no-trump. However, the suit slam is more often the safer choice, largely because the trump suit stands as a bulwark against going down two or three tricks, instead of one, if the vital finesse or suit-break does not materialize. The matter of going down these extra tricks is not so important in duplicate bridge, however, and the safety factor which controls many slam decisions in rubber bridge is more or less disregarded.

After the following bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | 4 ♣ | Pass | 4 ♦ |

East-West will reach six no-trump on the following hands, in duplicate bridge:

| WEST | EAST |
|-------------|------------|
| ♠ A 3 | ♠ Q 7 |
| ♥ A K J 8 5 | ♥ Q 10 6 3 |
| ♦ K 6 | ♦ A 10 9 3 |
| ♣ A Q J 4 | ♣ 10 9 5 |

The heart contract is by far the safer. If a spade opening drives out West's ace on the first round, and West later loses the club finesse, the opponents can take only one club and one spade and West will be down one. At no-trump, if West loses the club finesse he may be down three or four, depending upon how many spade tricks the defenders run. But it is not so much of a risk, at that, because at duplicate bridge East-West will get a bad enough score if they bid any sort of slam and go down on it. Going down a few extra tricks cannot make it much worse. For the six no-trump bid to go wrong, North must open a spade, South must have the spade

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

king, and the club finesse must lose; furthermore, in the bidding West cannot tell but that East has the spade king, or the club king, or a diamond suit which will develop the necessary tricks without losing the club finesse. The combined chances are great enough to warrant bidding the slam at no-trump.

Bidding for a Suit-Break

The no-trump slam is equally advisable when everything depends upon a suit break.

The bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|------------------|------|
| 2 ♦ | Pass | 3 ♣ | Pass |
| 3 ♦ | Pass | 3 N-T | Pass |
| 4 N-T | Pass | 5 ♦ ¹ | Pass |

South bids six no-trump, not six diamonds (or clubs) on

♠ A K ♥ A ♦ A K Q 9 7 6 5 ♣ K 7 4

If the diamonds prove to be 7-4-1-1, with a four-card stopper in an opponent's hand, and if North does not show up with an unexpected powerhouse, the bad diamond break may cause South to be down several tricks at six no-trumps. At six diamonds, even with the bad break, he could hardly go down more than one. But the six no-trump bid is a good risk. North, who bid three no-trump, probably has at least a singleton diamond; the odds are three-to-two that the suit will break and six no-trump will be cold; and the situation is apparently one of a sure slam which most pairs in the game will bid.

When—and How—to Bid Grand Slams

It will be noted that the possibility of bidding seven on the foregoing hand was not even considered. Grand slams are not bid in duplicate bridge unless they are sure things. To make

¹ Showing the ace of clubs, whether the Blackwood or Culbertson four no-trump bid is used. In the Culbertson 4-5 No-trump Convention, five clubs (the lowest bid suit) would be the automatic sign-off to deny possession of an ace.

WHEN --AND HOW --TO BID GRAND SLAMS

seven-odd sure, from the standpoint of the South hand, North would have to have the club ace-queen or the club ace and the king of hearts or queen of spades, and the diamonds would have to break. One of these contingencies is likely, but not likely enough. In rubber bridge, a grand slam is justified if the odds are two-to-one in favour of making it. In duplicate bridge, odds of ten-to-one would be nearer to the requirements.

Bidding and making any grand slam is a good enough score for any but the greediest duplicate players. When you can get to seven and make it, do not worry about playing it in no-trump as against a major, or in a major as against a minor.

True precision in grand slam bidding requires that the partners be able to know, and not merely to infer by refined means of deduction, that all the aces and other key cards are accounted for. This brings up a moot point among expert players: Should any of the conventional four no-trump ace-showing bids be used in duplicate games?

The answer, to be given most emphatically, is that they should be used. However, they must be used intelligently. The fact that you are using an ace-showing convention should not be taken to mean that you need not take advantage of all the logical bids which can be used to show strength in specific suits, nor that you must use the slam convention every time you are slam minded. There are many possible slam hands in which the use of artificial bids will do the defenders more good than it will do the bidding side. It is equally necessary to employ one of the 'gadgets' attached to the slam conventions, whereby in a duplicate game you can stay out of a hopeless slam but still play a contract of four or five no-trump when you want to take advantage of the higher no-trump score. For example, East-West may decide not to bid a slam on the following hands:

| WEST | EAST |
|-------------|-------------|
| ♠ A K Q J 3 | ♠ 9 8 6 |
| ♥ A | ♥ K J 7 6 3 |
| ♦ K 7 5 | ♦ A Q |
| ♣ K J 10 5 | ♣ 9 8 3 |

BIDDING FOR GAMES AND SLAMS

but there is no reason why they should stop at five spades. If the club finesse works, six-odd can be made at spades or no-trump, and the five-spade contract will be inferior. If the club finesse loses, they would get a bad score by bidding a slam, but could still get the maximum score by playing in no-trump. In the Culbertson System, this would be accomplished as follows:

| WEST | EAST |
|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♥ |
| 3 ♣ | 3 ♠ |
| 4 N-T | 5 ♦ |
| 5 N-T | Pass |

In the Culbertson 4-5 No-trump Convention, a bid of four no-trump followed by a bid of five no-trump shows all four aces; but this is obviously not the message when the response to the four no-trump bid reveals that the partner has one or more aces, as it does in the above bidding sequence. Therefore West's five no-trump bid cannot show all four aces in his hand, and becomes quite obviously an admission that he does not want to reach a slam but does want to play in no-trump. The pass by East then lands his side in the best available contract.

Appraising the Field

In both game and slam bidding, one should take his general policy of aggressiveness or conservatism from an appraisal of the field in which he is playing. Weak players are usually timid souls who do not bid as many games as they can make; therefore, in a weak field you need not worry so much when you miss a close game that could be made; most of the other pairs will miss it too. Another important consideration is that weak players do not play their cards to the best advantage, and if they miss a game you may not have to bid the game to beat them; you can stop at the same part-score they stop at and get a good score by making an overtrick which they will miss.

In appraising the field, you must remember that your actual competition is not the pair you play against, but the

APPRAISING THE FIELD

pairs who play the same cards in the same direction. In a Mitchell game, you can tell who these pairs are by looking up and down the row of tables; if you are North-South, you will be compared only with the other North-South pairs, and if you are East-West you will be compared only with the other East-West pairs. In a Howell game, you cannot be sure what other pairs will have their scores compared with yours on any particular board.¹ You can judge only from the strength of the field as a whole.

It should be stressed that your appraisal of the field does not affect your normal bidding to any great extent. It should serve only to deter you in certain very close cases in which you might be prompted to make a gambling bid.

The bidding is:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 ♦ | Pass | 3 ♦ | Pass |

and South holds:

♠ J 3 ♥ 6 ♦ K Q 10 9 6 5 3 ♣ A J 2

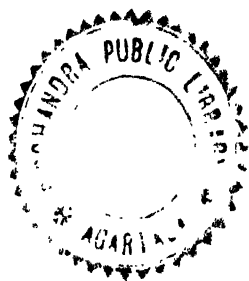
Should South take a chance on three no-trumps? The bidding definitely marks North with the ace of diamonds; otherwise he would have very little reason to raise a minor suit. The bidding also marks North as being minus a stopper in either spades or clubs, and perhaps in both. The only danger to South is that a spade will be opened, because with any other opening he will probably be able to get nine tricks. In a weak field, South will play safe by passing, depending on whatever overtricks he may make to give him a good score. In a fair to strong field, he will bid three no-trump, not only

¹ In all my bridge-playing experience I have known only one player who attempted, even in a Howell game, to figure out what other pairs would be playing the same board in the same direction. He was a very quick-witted gentleman, but let me add that he was too smart for his own good and sometimes paid so much attention to his mental gymnastics that he made careless mistakes in the bidding or play of a hand. The bridge shark tries to figure out almost every angle, but even he does not go so far as to try to cut it as close as that.

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as a good gamble, but also in the knowledge that he is in the majority.

Such decisions, as well as appraisal of the field, properly come under the heading 'Choice of Contracts' and will be more fully described in the chapter on that subject, which follows.



CHAPTER X

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

The most successful tournament players reputedly 'play for averages'—try merely to get a normal result on every board, and pick up their winning surplus on the presents they receive.

This is not an accurate description of their duplicate strategy. If it were, they would not be successful. A purely passive psychology is as fatal in duplicate bridge as it is in rubber bridge, and the would-be champion must not be content merely to avoid being beaten; he must aggressively and actively try to win.

But it is true that a successful tournament player seeks to arrive at a normal final contract whenever possible. He does not gamble on a top-or-bottom contract. He does not arrogantly try to outguess the entire field in the hope that they will be all out of step but him. He would be happiest if he could be sure what the other pairs playing the same cards would do, so that he could do the same thing.

Victory in a duplicate-bridge game, like victory in war, usually goes to the pair that makes the fewest blunders. If you consistently arrive at sound contracts, you will be above average because some pairs will blunder into unsound contracts. If you gamble on tops or bottoms, the tops and bottoms will probably balance out to an average score, no more.

The object of bidding in duplicate, therefore, is to locate and stop at a sound contract. On the way to the contract, a player may indulge in tricky tactics designed to lure the opposition into a spot where they can be doubled, or to bewilder them in their later defensive play, or to talk them out of a double or a sacrifice bid. Such stratagems are the

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

property of those who can handle them. In any event, they must be so planned that they will not interfere with the safety or the soundness of the ultimate resting place.

The Big Problem in Duplicate

The choice of the final contract is the principal problem of duplicate-bridge bidding. The selection of opening bids and responses, the decision to overcall, to double or to pass, are only the groundwork for this eventual choice. The questions of part-score or game, of game or slam, are only two of many phases in this continuous process of deciding, hand after hand, what should be your final action during the bidding—how high to go, what suit to select, whether to bid again, to double or to pass, and whether it is more profitable for your side or for the opponents to play the hand.

When choosing the final contract, the duplicate-bridge player must keep a host of diverse considerations in his head: The field in which he is playing. The vulnerability. The differential between no-trump, major-suit and minor-suit scores. The translation of total points which can be scored on the board into match-points which will eventually be entered on the recap sheets.

The effective duplicate-bridge player tries generally to take the course which will yield the most match-points in the long run, but this does not mean that his specific objective is a top on every board he plays. There is a law of diminishing returns in the values of match-points, exactly as there is a law of diminishing returns in the values of the total points you can score in a duplicate game.

Attention has already been called to the situation in which you can defeat the opponents by 500 points, and the plus 500 will give you a top score. You would not take the slightest risk to make that set 800 points, or 1,100, or 1,400; the additional points would be of no value to you since they would represent no increase in the number of *catch* points awarded to you for that hand.

In the same manner there is a limit beyond which you stop

NO-TRUMP V. SUIT CONTRACTS

gambling for match-points. A final score consisting of 65 to 70 per cent of the total available match-points will almost always win a duplicate game. Now, suppose top on a board is 10 points; if you can get 6 or 7 points, board after board, you will win the game. If you gamble to add a couple of match-points, winning the gamble will not do you a great deal of good because you can still do no more than win the duplicate game; whereas if you lose the gamble, you will fall to the neighbourhood of an average score and someone else will win the game.

So the winning duplicate player does not actually play averages, but neither does he play for tops. He tries to choose a final contract which if successful will give him a good score and which if he miscalculated slightly will still leave him a few match-points.

No-Trump v. Suit Contracts

Most people who write about duplicate-bridge like to lay out a hand which will produce ten tricks at spades and will also produce ten tricks at no-trump, and talk about the vast superiority of the no-trump contract, which counts 630 points as against 620. Beguiled by such stories, deluded duplicate players go wrong in cases like this:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass |
| 3 N-T | Pass | | |

I have seen a player in the North position pass three no-trump, holding a hand like this:

♠ K 9 7 6 3 ♥ A 8 ♦ K J 4 ♣ 8 7 2

He knows that four spades would be a safer (and so a sounder) contract, but he grasps greedily for those extra 10 points.

Maybe he will gain by passing, and maybe he will find his partner with a hand like this:

♠ A 10 8 4 ♥ Q 9 6 5 ♦ A 10 6 ♣ A J

and with a club opening and 3-1 spade break, three no-trump

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

may go down while four spades would still have an odds-on chance to make.

The principal reason that North should not pass a three no-trump contract, but should bid four spades, is that North can expect most of the other North-South pairs to play the board at four spades: (1) Because some Souths will open with one club or one diamond, North will respond one spade, South will raise spades, and no-trump may never be mentioned; (2) because at some tables an overcall may be interposed by an opponent, preventing a no-trump rebid by South; (3) because some South may simply bid four spades instead of three no-trump; (4) because at least some North players who, like this North, consider passing three no-trump, will think better of it and bid four spades.

And there are other possibilities, all of which argue that the majority of the North-South pairs will be at four spades.

Now, if North sticks with the majority he is sure to get several points, even if the no-trump contract turns out to be superior. He will probably pick up a point or two from pairs which miss the game altogether, if the hand is a borderline one, or from pairs who get too high, if the hand is temptingly strong.

If North joins the minority of no-trump players, he may get a top at times and a bottom at times. When he gets the bottom, he tosses away his chance at the free point or two that he would have picked up from the unsound bidders.

Playing Two No-Trump Contracts

There are nevertheless many cases in which a *sound* no-trump contract is played at duplicate when an equally sound, and perhaps a bit safer, major-suit contract would be played at rubber bridge. This will happen more often at part-score contracts than at game contracts.

The contract of two no-trump is seldom played at rubber bridge. Experts do not hang one trick short of game if they can see any bare possibility that the one vital game-going trick can be developed. Any no-trump contract is inherently

NO-TRUMP RATHER THAN A MAJOR SUIT

unsafe, and by the time two no-trump is reached it is usually desirable to follow one of these courses: Either go on to three no-trump, perhaps risking a loss of 200 or 300 points for a possible gain of 500 or 600 points, or, if game is out of the question, get out of no-trump into a safe contract of three in a suit.

In duplicate, two no-trump contracts are frequently played and are highly desirable. If made, the contract scored 120 points as against 110 points for making three in a minor, or as against the same 110 points for making two of a major.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♦ | Pass |
| 1 N-T | Pass | 2 N-T | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

South holds:

♠ A 10 ♥ K 7 3 ♦ Q 9 5 2 ♣ A 10 8 4

In rubber bridge, he would raise North's one-diamond contract to two diamonds, rather than bid one no-trump. The diamond contract would be safer if North, with a weak hand, had to pass.

In rubber bridge, even if he did bid one no-trump over one diamond, he would return to the safer three-diamond contract over two no-trump.

But in duplicate, South cannot take a chance on bidding two diamonds: for if North has the type of hand on which he would pass either a one no-trump or a two-diamond rebid, South must make sure he is in the more lucrative no-trump contract. And, having bid one no-trump, South does not flee from two no-trump into a three-diamond refuge, for the no-trump contract will pay off even if the diamond contract would play a full trick better.

No-Trump Rather than a Major Suit

Hands in which all suits are obviously protected, and in which there are no distributional values to speak of, present

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

legitimate reasons to choose a no-trump contract in order to get the additional trick points:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 N-T | Pass |
| 3 N-T | | | |

South holds:

♠ K Q J 8 4 ♥ Q 8 2 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ Q J

Since North has announced balanced distribution and a strong hand with protection in every suit, there is nothing for South to be afraid of; and there is no reason to think the hand will develop more tricks in spades than in no-trump. South had no reason even to show his rebiddable spade suit and give North a choice between spades and no-trump. On his own responsibility, South can choose the latter.

Choosing No-Trump with a Two-Suiter

Strong two-suiters which are obviously misfits represent other cases in which no-trump may be a better choice than a suit even when the hand is strictly not of the no-trump type.¹

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 ♠ | Pass |
| 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 ♦ | Pass |
| 2 N-T | Pass | 3 N-T | Pass |

North holds:

♠ K J 10 9 5 ♥ J 5 ♦ K Q 7 5 4 ♣ 10

North's hand is sufficiently solid to promise that one or both of his own suits can be established (with entries to them being possible) or that his honour cards in South's suit will permit South to set up his own hand. In these circumstances no-trump should be as safe a contract as either major suit, and more lucrative because of the additional ten points.

¹ This is frequently true in rubber bridge, on the same type of hand, when the incentive for choosing the no-trump contract is that it represents the cheapest and best chance for game.

MAJOR SUITS RATHER THAN MINORS

Where no safe no-trump contract seems available, one does not hesitate in duplicate-bridge to raise a major suit on a doubleton, even in some cases in which the suit has not been rebid. In the foregoing example, if South had not been able to bid no-trump North might have raised hearts with J-x.

The following is another typical situation:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♥ | 3 ♣ |
| Pass | Pass | 3 ♦ | Pass |
| 3 ♠ | Pass | 4 ♦ | Pass |
| 4 ♥ | | | |

South holds:

♠ A J 5 3 2 ♥ K 6 ♦ A 9 7 5 ♣ 8 5

North's bidding has shown quite clearly that he has at least a 5-5 two-suiter, and a five-diamond contract should be absolutely safe because North should lose no trump tricks, should be able to ruff any losing hearts in dummy, and should have at most three losing cards in the two black suits, one of which will be taken care of by the spade ace. At hearts, North is likely to be off a trump trick if he has something like A-Q-x-x-x and the outstanding hearts are 4-2, which is a normal division. However, even if North loses a trump trick and makes only four-odd at hearts, he will get 120 trick-points as against the 100 he would score by making five diamonds. It is a sufficient advantage to justify South's show of preference on his two-card suit support instead of his four-card support.

Major Suits Rather than Minors

The preference for major-suit contracts as against minor-suit contracts should be even more pronounced than the preference for no-trump contracts as against suit contracts. At no-trump, certain dangers are ever-present; but these dangers need not be considered as between one suit contract and another. The scoring advantage of no-trump over a major suit is limited to 10 points, so that three-odd in a major suit (140 points) is better than two-odd at no-trump (120

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

points), and unless the same number of tricks can be developed at either contract there is no advantage to playing at no-trump. As between a major and a minor, however, the difference is 10 points per trick; it is as good to make two of a major as to make three of a minor (110 points each), and it is better to make three of a major than four of a minor (140 points as against 130), or four of a major than five of a minor (120 points plus bonus as against 100 points plus bonus).

These differences justify the taking of some risks to get into a major-suit contract.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 1 N-T | Pass |
| 2 ♦ | Pass | | |

North would pass, at rubber bridge, on

♠ 10 7 3 ♥ Q 2 ♦ 10 8 5 3 ♣ A 8 5 2

Why bid when game is out of the question and the diamond contract is safer?

But at duplicate North takes a chance by returning to two spades.

Bidding on Three-Card Majors

This differential leads at times to choices which would never be considered at rubber bridge. A three-card major may be chosen as a rebid when an obvious minor-suit rebid is available. A three-card major may be used for a response to a take-out double at times when it would be unnecessary to bid a three-card suit in a rubber game.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | 1 ♦ | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 1 ♠ | | | |

South holds:

♠ A J 6 ♥ Q 4 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ A J 7 6 2

Unable to bid one no-trump (because he cannot stop diamonds) or to raise hearts, South's rubber-bridge rebid would

BIDDING ON THREE-CARD MAJORS

be two clubs. (He may not pass, for the free one-over-one take-out is forcing, just as it would be if West had passed.)

In duplicate, South gets the spade bid in early, so that a part-score contract on a combined seven-card (or even a six-card!) spade holding will not be overlooked. North might pass a two-club rebid, even if he held a four-card spade suit, if his hands were minimum. If North bids two hearts over one spade, South can safely pass; if North raises to two spades South can safely pass, and even if North has only three-card spade support South will often be able to eke out his contract, perhaps by cross-ruffing, and score 110 points at two spades when the limit at clubs would also be two-odd for a 90-point score.

The preceding hand did not, of course, offer any clear-cut rebid; but even the safest and most obvious minor-suit rebids are often deferred when there is an opportunity to show a major suit at a lower level.

North-South are vulnerable and South holds:

♠ 8 7 4 3 ♥ J 2 ♦ A 10 ♣ A K Q J 3

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | 1 ♦ | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | 2 ♠ | Pass |
| 2 N-T | | | |

South's spade suit, of course, is not a biddable one, and the strong club suit, plus the diamond stopper, suggests a two-club or one no-trump rebid. But the opportunity to show a four-card spade holding at the one-level, and at a time when it will, in effect, be a forcing bid, suggests that the spades be shown immediately, deferring a possible no-trump bid or club rebid until later.

The choice of contracts in competitive situations becomes possible when both sides by bids and rebids, or by consistent passing, have more or less clearly defined the general extent of their strength. In such re-opening situations as those described on page 159, even though there has been at least one bid on each side, the players are still groping in the dark; it

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

could not be said that an intelligent choice of contracts is possible, because there is too little information.

Once the general strength of both sides becomes known, the final choice depends upon a player's estimate of the specific trick-taking power of each side. He must try to figure this exactly: to judge that his opponents can make exactly two spades, but not three; that his side can make exactly two hearts and therefore cannot go down more than one trick at three hearts. In all these competitive situations the final choice of contracts comes down to a choice between bidding again and playing the hand, perhaps doubled; or passing and letting the opponents play the hand; or perhaps doubling the opponents.

Making Close Part-Score Doubles

Use of the penalty double must be developed to a fine art in duplicate-bridge. The duplicate player cannot indulge himself with a 'two-trick rule' as in rubber bridge: he must often double when he expects to defeat the opposing contract by only one trick. Light doubles of part-score contracts are not limited to those which, like one no-trump or two diamonds, cannot produce game; opposing two-spade contracts and three-club contracts, which will be game if the double does not pan out, must be doubled just as lightly. (Actually one receives about as poor a match-point score from the failure of one type of double as the other, because letting the opponents make any doubled contract is costly.)

The following example is a good illustration of this principle:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 2 ♣ | 2 ♥ | 3 ♣ |
| Pass | Pass | | |

Both sides are vulnerable, and North holds:

♠ Q 8 ♥ K 9 7 2 ♦ K 10 8 3 ♣ K 8 4

North-South can probably make three hearts. But except in the unlikely event that East holds the club ace, North-South can probably manage to defeat three clubs by one trick.

MOST DOUBLES ARE TENTATIVE

Let us say that if North doubles three clubs, he will defeat the contract three times out of four and it will be made against him the fourth time. If he doubles and beats it, he will score 200 points—better than his side could do by bidding and making three hearts. In the one case when it is made against him, though, he will lose heavily, being minus 670 when he could have been plus 140.

From the standpoint of total points, it would be an atrocious double, for over the course of the four hands North would lose several hundred points.

From the standpoint of match-points, it is a good double, for over the course of the four hands North gets three good scores as against one bad one.

Most Doubles are Tentative

The double in such cases is not a 'hands-off' command. Doubles of low contracts are generally tentative in duplicate bridge when there has been competitive bidding which indicates that the strength is more or less evenly divided between the two sides. It is necessary in duplicate bidding to probe for the best contract, and a close double is a tentative thrust just as a shaded major-suit or no-trump bid is. In the case previously described, North was able only to give a single raise and South was not able to rebid freely: thus, North-South can probably make no more than a part-score and in such a case not more than a one-trick set at three clubs can be expected. This one-trick set will, however, be a better score (plus 200 if doubled) than a part-score at hearts.

If North had bid three hearts over three clubs, the opportunity to play at three clubs doubled would have been lost. But the opportunity to play three hearts is not lost by the double, for if South's hand is unsuited to defensive play he may go to three hearts, a suit in which North has already shown support. North, having learned from his partner's pass that there is no game, doubles to offer South an additional option in *South's* eventual choice of contracts.

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Sometimes close doubles are not nearly so dangerous as they may seem.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|--------|
| Pass | Pass | 1 ♠ | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | Pass | 2 ♠ | Pass |
| Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass | Pass |
| 3 ♠ | Pass | Pass | Double |

East holds:

♠ K 8 ♥ A K 10 8 6 ♦ 8 6 ♣ K 7 3 2

East risks little by his double. When your side can make three hearts, for example, and can beat *four* spades, you will have a bad score if the opponents are pushed up to three spades and then make it on the nose. Doubling them will not make the score much worse even if they fulfil their contract. Doubling may be necessary to compensate you for the three-heart bid you could have made in case the opponents cannot make their contract.

From the bidding and East's hand, it is apparent that everyone at the table has been stretching his hand a bit. West could not raise the hearts freely, but did so under pressure. North was able to rebid to re-open the bidding, but not thereafter. South was not able to raise spades freely, and apparently did so merely to keep East-West from making a part-score. From the fact that West raised hearts, plus North's spade bid which locates the ace under East's king, East can assume that three hearts can be made but not four: the combined hands must probably lose a spade, one or two diamonds and one or two clubs. In defence against spades East can expect to win four tricks, and West probably can win a trick or he would have been unable to raise hearts. If North-South can make exactly the three-spade bid which they reached with such difficulty, East-West will probably get 2 or 3 match-points at most.

If the doubled contract is made, East will not get even those match-points; but if East's double succeeds he may get 7 or 8 match-points. He has more to gain than to lose by the double.

DOUBLES OF HIGH CONTRACTS

Doubles of High Contracts

It seldom pays in duplicate bridge to double a high contract which the opponents reach under their own power—that is, which they bid because they obviously think they can make it and not because your competitive bidding has pushed them. In the following example, the four-spade contract is reached freely:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 ♠ | Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass |
| 4 ♠ | | | |

West should not double on a hand like the following:

♠ K J 6 3 ♥ A K 7 ♦ J 8 5 2 ♣ Q 6

because he has too little to gain by it, and too much to lose. If by chance North stretched a point to bid three spades, and South stretched to go on to four, it will be good enough for West to defeat the contract and to get a top score on the board; other pairs with the North-South cards may not have stretched and may have stopped at, and made, a part-score. If West doubles, runs into unexpected North-South distribution, and has the doubled contract made against him, he will probably have a bottom or very near to it. The two-trick rule comes back into play here: West should not double unless he can be fairly sure of defeating the contract by at least two tricks. Otherwise he may find that his double gives information on which declarer can save a trick and lose no more when doubled than he would have lost undoubled had he not been tipped off as to the location of the cards against him.

An opposing contract of five in a major suit, which they reached because by sacrifice bidding you pushed them to it, should almost never be doubled. Suppose the following bidding, with North-South vulnerable:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♣ | 3 ♠ | 4 ♣ |
| 4 ♠ | 5 ♣ | Pass | Pass |
| 5 ♠ | | | |

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

East-West attempted to sacrifice against four spades; North-South apparently believed that they could make five spades and score more points than by doubling five clubs. Usually they should be permitted to play the five-spade contract.

A contract of five in a major suit is an unnatural contract. In this particular case, North-South must have calculated very closely, and on close calculation there is always a chance that they may be wrong. If it proves that they can make six spades, East-West will get a few points because other North-South pairs will have reached the slam. If it proves that North-South could make only four spades, East-West will beat them a trick and get an excellent score. Even if North-South can make precisely five spades, East-West will still get a few points because there will be North-South pairs who bid four and made five. Only by an unsuccessful double in such a case would East-West risk getting a zero.

By the same reasoning, an opposing slam contract should almost never be doubled (again, unless it is bid as a sacrifice against a contract your side can make). Beating a slam at all will be good enough; having it made doubled against you (and the double itself may be the tip-off which permits declarer to make his contract) will almost always result in a bottom. In the following deal the doubler had no excuse for his double.

North dealer

North-South vulnerable

| | | |
|--------------|--|------------|
| ♠ 10 9 8 3 2 | <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div> | ♠ K 5 4 |
| ♥ 6 | ♠ J 7 | ♥ J 10 5 3 |
| ♦ QJ 8 4 3 | ♥ A Q 4 | ♦ K 6 |
| ♣ J 3 | ♦ A 7 | ♣ 10 8 6 5 |
| | ♣ A K Q 9 4 2 | |
| | ♠ A Q 6 | |
| | ♥ K 9 8 7 2 | |
| | ♦ 10 9 5 2 | |
| | ♣ 7 | |

USE OF THE REDOUBLE

The bidding:

| NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ |
| 3 ♣ | Pass | 3 N-T | Pass |
| 4 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♠ | Pass |
| 5 ♦ | Pass | 5 ♥ | Pass |
| 6 ♥ | Double | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

If West's overcall did have any trick-taking power, and North-South therefore were off two tricks, they should not have bid the slam and it might be assumed that most North-South pairs had not bid it. Therefore it would suffice for East-West to defeat the slam by one trick and be plus 100 when most other East-West pairs would be minus 620 or 650 by having a game made against them. When East doubles he tells South where the outstanding defensive strength is, warns South of the bad trump break, and thus makes it possible for South to fulfil a contract which otherwise might have been played differently and defeated, a normal trump break being expected.¹

Use of the Redouble

The redouble is used very sparingly in duplicate bridge. Like the double of an opposing slam contract, a redouble of your own contract offers very poor percentage. Making the contract doubled will usually give you a good score, and making it redoubled would make your score but little better. Going down redoubled will usually give you very close to a bottom. By the redouble you have less to gain than to lose.

Almost the only clear-cut cases in which a redouble is advisable is when you could apparently score more points by

¹ West opened a diamond, dummy's ace won and the queen of hearts was cashed. Because of the double South was able to place four hearts in East's hands, so he abandoned that suit and led three rounds of clubs, discarding two diamonds; he then took the spade finesse, again placing East with the king because of the double, ruffed a spade in dummy, ruffed a club in his hand, led a heart to dummy's ace and led another club, now established, from dummy. Whether or not East trumped, South could discard a diamond on this and would have to get two of the last three tricks.

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

making an undoubled higher contract than by making a doubled low contract.

Neither side vulnerable.

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|--------|----------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Double | 2 ♣ | 2 ♦ |
| Double | Redouble | | |

West holds:

♠ 6 ♥ A J 10 7 6 3 ♦ A Q 7 5 ♣ Q 6

It appears to West, especially in view of East's free bid, that two diamonds doubled can be made. But it appears that other East-West pairs will reach a game contract at hearts and (again in the light of East's free bid) that they will make it. Making two diamonds doubled, even with two overtricks, may not approach the score which could be made at four hearts. West therefore redoubles so that the two-diamond contract will also be a game if it is made.

There is a similar situation when you are doubled at a game contract although you are quite sure that you could bid a slam and make it.

Neither side vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♠ | Pass |
| 2 ♥ | Pass | 3 N-T | Pass |
| 4 ♦ | Pass | 5 ♦ | Double |

South should redouble on a hand like this:

♠ — — ♥ K J 10 6 ♦ A K J 7 5 3 ♣ A 5 3

It is probable that East has doubled because he holds the A-Q of spades and a sure trump trick. However, South would have gone on to six diamonds had he not been doubled, and because he has no losing spades South would undoubtedly have made it.

That would have given him 920 points, whereas if he makes five diamonds doubled with an overtrick he will get only 650. He must redouble so that his score (950, if made with an

CHOICE BETWEEN GAME AND PENALTY

overtrick) will equal or exceed the scores of other pairs which bid and made six on the North-South cards.

Choice Between Game and Penalty

When you can make a game and are offered a penalty by doubling the opponents, you must carefully calculate the exact score you can make and estimate the exact penalty and then choose the higher score.

It does not pay to be too optimistic about the number of tricks the opponents will go down. They must be given credit for enough intelligence to have calculated the probable set, and may through freakish distribution win a trick or so more than you think they can.

Neither side vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♥ | 2 ♠ | 3 ♥ |
| 4 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♠ | 5 ♥ |

South holds:

♠ A Q 6 5 3 ♥ A Q ♦ A K 8 2 ♣ J 6

Five spades seem sure, for a score of 450. Can five hearts be defeated three tricks? It would seem so, from South's hand. But East is no fool, and the dummy is very likely to turn up with something like

♠ x ♥ J x x x x ♦ x ♣ K x x x x x

In this case the set will be only 300, which is ruinous.

Such a situation calls for a bid of five spades. There is the matter of considering what other pairs are doing. Certainly there will be cases in which East-West never get to five hearts, either because West did not overcall in the first place or because East does not choose to take a penalty. When that occurs, South will play a four-spade contract and score 450 or 480. If this South bids five spades, he will at least tie such pairs; if he doubles five hearts and beats it only 300 points, he is bottom.

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

With a sure vulnerable game within your grasp, it is unwise as a general policy to double non-vulnerable opponents at a low contract, however outrageous an overbid it may seem.

North-South vulnerable, East-West not

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | 2 N-T | |

North holds:

♠ Q 6 ♥ A Q 7 ♦ K J 9 5 ♣ J 10 9 3

With South's opening bid, a vulnerable game (600 points or more) seems sure. To compensate for it, West would have to be defeated four tricks or more at two diamonds—that is, West would have to be held to four tricks. Can North count on this? Probably not if West happens to have, say, a seven-card diamond suit. It is safer to go after the vulnerable game.

In rubber bridge, of course, North would double.

Bidding like this was not unusual in the days of auction bridge, before players learned the value of penalties as compared to games:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1 N-T | Double | Pass | 2 N-T |

We laughed at such bidding then, for if East-West can make any no-trump contract they can also defeat South's one no-trump for a more profitable penalty. Such a bid on East's part would be equally laughable in contract bridge—except in duplicate. Vulnerability conditions may alter even such fundamentals as this.

East-West vulnerable, North-South not

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1 N-T | Double | Pass | 3 N-T |

East holds:

♠ 6 3 ♥ 10 8 ♦ J 6 ♣ A K Q J 6 5 2

If he passes the double, South may manage to run with four tricks unless West happens to open a club, which is unlikely. If South gets four tricks, the set will be only 500 points.

PREFER THE PLUS SCORE

If West can stop the suit South opens—which is probable in view of West's double—East-West are sure to make three no-trump and score 600 or more points.

The corollary to these principles is that a non-vulnerable pair should be even more anxious than in rubber bridge to double vulnerable opponents. If the non-vulnerable pair are weak and cannot make a game, a 200-point penalty is better for them than any part-score they can make. If the non-vulnerable pair are strong and can make a game, a 500-point penalty for a two-trick set will be better than any game they can make.

East-West vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | Double | |

North holds:

♠ Q 2 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ A K Q 7 3

North-South are practically sure to make a game, in view of South's opening bid and North's diamond stopper, plus his nearly solid club suit, but there is also an excellent chance that two diamonds can be beaten 500 points. As in the case on page 148, South will realize that North's double is not a command to pass, but a means of offering a wider choice of contracts. If South has an unbalanced hand with a singleton or void in diamonds, he will take the double out and North-South will reach and probably make their game.

Prefer the Plus Score

The vast majority of good match-point scores are 'plus' scores. A minus score may still be top on the board, and in many cases it is a fine score which is about as good as getting a top, but we may still safely draw the following conclusion: When you have to choose between doubling the opponents for a sure set, and bidding for an aggressive contract of your own, if your own contract is at all doubtful it is better to double the opponents, thereby taking the sure plus score.

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

Both sides vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|--------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 4 ♦ | 4 ♠ | 5 ♣ |
| Double | | | |

South holds:

♠ K ♥ A K Q J ♦ A 8 6 5 2 ♣ 5 3 2

North's free four-spade bid makes it appear probable that North-South will have an excellent play for five spades. Nevertheless, South is correct to double. He knows he is up against a freak distribution in which void suits in the East-West hands might defeat a five-spade contract even when it appears ice-cold. The opposing side's club contract, however, cannot fail to go down. (When this case occurred, the majority bid five spades and were down one; because, although North held eight spades to the A-Q, the opposing spades were divided 4-0 and East-West were able to win two club tricks and a trump trick. The doubled five-club contract went down only 300 points, but it was a top score.)

The idea of choosing the sure plus score is not, however, a rigid rule. It is only a rough guide in close situations. When unusual or unnatural bidding by your opponents has put you into a spot where you seem to face an inescapable poor score, in which case you are said to be 'fixed', you must often take desperate chances. They may not work, but when they do happen to work they may salvage something from the wreckage and even turn a bottom into a top.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♥ |
| 4 ♣ | 5 ♥ | Pass | 6 ♥ |
| 6 ♠ | 7 ♥ | | |

West holds:

♠ — — ♥ A Q 10 8 4 ♦ A Q J 8 6 ♣ 10 9 4

West knows that he has less than an even chance to make seven hearts, especially in view of the opening bid which was made against him. But it is equally obvious that East-West can surely make a *game* in hearts, and probably a small slam, and thus the other East-West pairs will probably be plus 650

STOPPING SHORT OF GAME

or more. It is most unusual for a player in South's position, who has opened the bidding, to sacrifice against an adverse slam contract, yet it appears from West's hand that his side will be unable to beat six spades more than two or three tricks, 300 or 500 points. By doubling or passing six spades, West will probably earn for his side only one or two match-points. His seven-heart bid may get him a bottom, but if by some freak of distribution it can be made he will have top or very close to it. In this case he takes a desperate chance rather than the sure plus score.

Stopping Short of Game

Except in these cases when one is fixed by his opponents' bidding, a doubtful hand usually calls for a pass as soon as possible. This will yield at least some sort of plus score at a part-score contract instead of risking a minus score at a game contract which probably could not be made.

Both sides vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | Pass |
| 2 ♥ | 2 ♠ | 3 ♦ | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

South holds:

♠ A 8 ♥ K J 8 7 5 3 ♦ 6 ♣ K 7 4 3

South passes in spite of the fact that North has made two free bids and probably has either a very strong diamond suit or a fairly strong hand. North was not able to raise the heart suit even after it was rebid; he did not have a club suit he could bid; he did not have enough of a stopper in spades for a two no-trump bid even after he had failed to bid one no-trump over one spade; South's conclusion must be that the North-South hands are not going to fit for game, may be a decided misfit in hearts, and had better be played at the lowest contract possible. The lowest contract available at the moment is three diamonds, so South passes.

This ability to 'stop on a dime', so important in duplicate

CHOICE OF CONTRACTS

bridge, comes primarily from an ability to interpret partner's bids and know whether they are strong or weak. Many a bid which normally shows strength may be construed as weak because of the circumstances in which it is made.

Both sides vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | 1 ♣ | 1 N-T | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | Pass | | |

West holds a hand which appears to justify another bid:

♠ A 7 5 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ K J 10 ♣ A Q 10 4

After all, did not East make a 'free' two-heart bid? But a free bid over an opposing no-trump overcall is not the same as a free bid over an opposing suit bid. With two or more honour-tricks, the responder doubles a no-trump overcall rather than bid over it, and this is especially true when the overcaller is vulnerable. Therefore East by his two-heart bid has denied sufficient strength to double one no-trump. West's hand is not strong enough to give hope of game opposite mediocre support as East must have, and the best West can do is to pass quickly.

Warning of a misfit may also lead to a justifiable quick stop when partner has shown inability to stand a double:

Neither side vulnerable

The bidding:

| WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|------|--------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ |
| 1 ♠ | Double | Pass | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | Pass | | |

North holds:

♠ K Q 10 ♥ 6 ♦ A K 10 6 5 ♣ A 8 7 6

If South had a strong hand, he could either leave the double in, or bid no-trump, or jump to three hearts; if North-South did not have a misfit, he could at least bid two diamonds or show a club suit. Obviously South is not only weak, but has nothing but hearts worth bidding. When a warning of this sort comes, it is well to pass at once, as North did in this case.

CHAPTER XI

SACRIFICE BIDDING

The first thought of the duplicate player must be this: Never leave the opponents in a contract at which they will make a plus score, if there is another available contract at which they can be held to a lower plus score, no matter how slight the difference may be.

In the realm of sacrifice bidding, this principle becomes the First Commandment of duplicate strategy. The light overcalls, the light raises of overcalls (page 103), and the light raises of opening bids (page 71) are nothing but preparation for eventual sacrifice contracts if such contracts are indicated by the bidding. The degree of need for such preparation is controlled by vulnerability conditions. In cases of equal vulnerability, when it is costly to go down more than two to stop an opposing game, sacrifice bids are relatively infrequent: when not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, they are extremely rare. It is in favourable vulnerability conditions, when a three-trick, 500-point loss will show a clear profit over letting the opponents make their vulnerable game, that the greatest stress is placed upon the sacrifice bids. You must not let the opponents play and make a vulnerable game when there is a contract available to you at which you can take at most a 500-point set.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 2 N-T | Pass | 3 N-T | |

North-South are vulnerable, East is not vulnerable and holds:

♠ Q J 10 9 7 6 4 ♥ 8 2 ♦ Q J 10 2 ♣ — —

At rubber bridge it would be stupid to save with a

SACRIFICE BIDDING

four-spade bid. The bid can hardly gain, for it gives the opponents a 'fielder's choice'. If North-South can make four no-trump they will bid it. If North-South consider it too dangerous to rebid they will double, and East, if he is lucky and goes down only 500, will have at best an approximate washout.

At duplicate bridge the four-spade bid is a 'must'. The danger of a 700 set, since it is a very slight danger, must be undertaken. It is suicidal to leave the opponents in a 600-point contract when there is a strong probability that they can be shifted into a 500-point contract. If they decide to bid four no-trump they *may* be beaten, for they, too, will have to take certain chances. If they see a strong probability that they can make a 630-point four no-trump contract they will bid it, whereas in rubber bridge they would not have bid it without a practical assurance that it could be made.

Sacrifices Against Slams

In sacrificing against opposing slam bids, especially when the opponents are vulnerable and you are not, you can go even farther. From the standpoint of straight arithmetic, you can afford to go down seven when not vulnerable (1,300 points) to prevent the opponents from making a vulnerable slam which will count anything from 1,370 to 1,440 for them. When vulnerable opponents bid a grand slam against you, you can afford to go down the somewhat ridiculous figure of 2,100 points eleven tricks, not vulnerable to keep them from making it, because a vulnerable grand slam scores 2,140 to 2,220 points.

In practice, these extreme sacrifices are not taken and should not be taken. You are fixed anyway when any sort of slam is bid against you and can be made: most pairs in the game will stop at a game contract, and you will have a poor score even if you go down 700 or 800 points to save yourself from a loss of 1,400 or more points. One way or the other you will have a poor score; it is better to pass and hope that by some unexpected value in partner's hand, or through some miscalculation or misplay on the part of the opponents, you

SACRIFICES AGAINST SLAMS

will be able to beat their slam and get something close to a top. In the long run you will pick up more match-points this way.

Therefore, as a general rule, you sacrifice against a small slam only when there is a chance that the penalty loss would give you an acceptable sacrifice even as against an opposing game contract.

North-South vulnerable. West holds:

♠ K 10 8 7 5 3 2 ♥ 7 ♦ J ♣ Q 6 3 2

After this bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | 2 ♠ |
| 3 ♣ | 4 ♠ | 5 ♥ | Pass |
| 6 ♥ | | | |

West may bid six spades. If East has four spades and a singleton club, the six-spade sacrifice may go down only 500 points. This will give East-West a better score than other East-West pairs against whom only a vulnerable game is bid and made.

When the opponents bid a grand slam against you, you must remember two things: First, with such good cards most pairs in the field will probably reach a small slam, but very few will reach a grand slam. Second, a grand slam contract is a very slippery proposition which offers declarer no leeway; an unexpected suit break, a bad guess or just a bit of carelessness in timing may cause him to go down. There is practically always a chance to beat a grand slam, no matter how weak your own hand may be. Therefore, sacrifice against an adverse grand slam only when you are sure that your penalty loss will be less than the opponents would score if they stopped at six and made it.

Neither side vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | 3 ♦ | 4 ♠ |
| 5 ♦ | Pass | 5 ♠ | Pass |
| 6 ♣ | Pass | 7 ♦ | |

SACRIFICE BIDDING

East holds:

♠ A 10 8 6 5 3 ♥ 6 2 ♦ — — ♣ 10 7 6 5 2

He can expect that at seven spades the loss will be at most a five-trick or 900 penalty, and this will be better for East-West than if North-South had stopped at six diamonds and made it. Nevertheless, the decision to sacrifice against seven diamonds is such a close one that it transcends a cold appraisal of the cards and of the bidding. Against a pair of North-South opponents who are accurate, reliable bidders, East might decide to sacrifice; but against a mediocre pair he would rather take his chances that his void in diamonds threatens declarer with a bad trump break against which the seven-diamond contract cannot be made.

If East did not have the ace of spades—if his hand were like this:

♠ K 10 8 6 5 3 ♥ 6 2 ♦ — — ♣ 10 7 6 5 2

—the prospect of loss would be no greater, but the hazards of the sacrifice would be increased. By bidding seven spades East might drive his opponents into seven no-trump, against which no sacrifice is possible and which would be an undisputed top for the opponents if they can make it.

When to Make Pre-emptive Bids

Due to the keen competition which exists even at the low levels of bidding in duplicate, opening pre-emptive bids and pre-emptive raises are usually to be avoided.

♠ K Q J 10 7 5 3 ♥ 8 ♦ Q 8 4 ♣ 10 2

This hand, a good opening three-spade bid in rubber bridge, is a better pass in duplicate. With a suit of such strength you are unlikely to be shut out of the bidding. If you bid three spades and the outstanding strength is evenly divided, you may find that you could have made two spades but not three, while your opponents cannot make three in any suit. In that case, you will have a minus score, whereas by letting the bidding develop naturally you might have obtained the contract at two spades and made a plus score.

WHEN TO MAKE PRE-EMPTIVE BIDS

Almost the only time you make a pre-emptive bid in duplicate is when your own hand is hopeless defensively and you have good reason to think the opponents have the bulk of the strength and will reach a game contract if unhindered:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♥ | |

Unless West is trapping, the fact that he passed one club is rather discouraging. East may therefore choose to put in an obstructive bid on a hand like this:

♠ J 10 3 ♥ 7 ♦ K Q J 9 7 6 5 2 ♣ 8

A four-diamond bid may keep North-South out of their best contract, and if doubled may represent a good sacrifice, especially as some East players may have to bid five diamonds to take a sacrifice over a North-South game contract. If West did happen to be trapping, four diamonds may be made.

The jump raise of partner's major-suit bid from one to four is unwise except on a freak hand of no defensive strength. Thus, partner's opening one-spade bid, after an intervening pass, should not be jumped to four spades on this hand:

♠ J 8 7 5 3 ♥ 7 ♦ A 9 6 5 2 ♣ 10 7

It may prove advisable to stop at three spades, depending upon the opponents' bidding, and a two-diamond response is preferable as a first step. With a weaker hand:

♠ Q 8 7 5 3 ♥ 7 ♦ Q J 8 6 2 ♣ 10 7

a raise of partner's one-spade bid to two spades is ample.

Only when the hand is so weak and so freakish as the following is the immediate jump to game wise:

♠ 10 8 7 6 4 2 ♥ 7 ♦ J 9 8 3 2 ♣ 9

If partner bids one spade opposite this hand, you know that unless he has a powerful hand which requires no support in high cards, the opponents probably have a game. You may as well jump to four spades: If you cannot make it, you would probably have had to bid it as a sacrifice anyway.

The same principle applies to certain raises of overcalls

SACRIFICE BIDDING

which may have been made with a sacrifice contract in mind. For example, East holds the following hand:

♠ 7 3 ♥ Q 10 9 6 ♦ 5 ♣ Q 8 7 5 3 2

North-South are vulnerable, and the bidding goes:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♣ | 2 ♦ | |

East could do much worse than jump immediately to five clubs. The policy of watchful waiting is overrated in this circumstance. If unimpeded, as by a simple raise to three clubs, the opponents will probably reach four spades (West cannot be very strong, or he would have done more than merely overcall, and he cannot be very strong in spades or he probably would have made a trap pass). Against a four-spade contract East will sacrifice at five clubs anyway. By bidding it immediately he can give the opponents a guess, for there is no such thing as a 'fielder's choice' at this level. Over the five-club bid South cannot choose between an aggressive contract and a double with any assurance, because he and North have not had a chance to find out exactly how well they fit. Thus, if either North or South doubles five clubs the other will not know whether to take it out or leave it in, and whenever a bridge player has to guess there is at least a chance that he will guess wrong and get a bad score.

The same type of pre-emptive raise is often effective when partner's opening bid has been doubled for a take-out.

CHAPTER XII

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

The bidding is over; you are to play the hand. The opening lead is made, and your dummy is spread out for you.

Your first step in a duplicate game is to appraise the contract you have reached and to examine its probable match-point result.

Appraisal of the contract involves several different factors. Is your contract a normal one—that is, will most other pairs have arrived at the same spot; or did you underbid, or overbid? Are you in a no-trump contract when you could do better in a suit, or in a suit contract when you could do better at no-trump? Have you arrived at a contract which you can probably make when the opponents could have outbid you and made a contract of their own?

You then appraise the opening lead. Is it favourable to you, unfavourable, or indifferent? Assuming that your contract is a normal one, is it probably the opening lead that other declarers, playing the same contract, will get? Or does it place you at an unusual advantage, or at an unusual disadvantage.

If your contract and opening lead both seem normal, you simply play the hand as well as you can. In any doubtful choice, you try to appraise the field and then choose the line of play which other declarers will probably choose unless, of course, you have good reason for playing otherwise.

WEST

♠ A K J 9 4

♥ A 7

♦ Q 6

♣ K 10 7 4

EAST

♠ 8 6 3 2

♥ K 5 3

♦ A K J 5 3

♣ 9

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

West, playing a contract of six spades, receives a club opening, loses to South's ace of clubs and wins a heart return. He cashes the ace of spades and both opponents follow. Should he go over to dummy and finesse for the queen of spades, or should he lay down the king of spades and play for a drop? It is a difficult choice in duplicate bridge, though mathematically the play for the drop is slightly superior to the finesse. A more important factor in West's decision will be the custom of the game in which he is playing—will most of the players in such circumstances 'bang-bang' or will most of them finesse? In the absence of any clue to guide him, West will stick with the majority. By so doing he protects his chance at a few match-points, even at worst. To play differently from the rest of the field would be a gamble on a top or a bottom score.

A similar situation exists when a player may finesse in either direction for a queen. Many players believe that the queen is more likely to be at the right than at the left of the jack of the same suit. In such a field, one finesses in the same direction as the majority.

Do not take this advice to mean that you should run with the pack when some adverse bidding or defensive play has definitely given you a line on the defenders' holdings, or when you are familiar with a line of play which is definitely superior to the ordinary play.

DUMMY

♠ 6 4 3
♥ A K
♦ K Q 9 5 2
♣ 7 5 4

DECLARER

♠ A Q 7 5 2
♥ Q 7 5
♦ A 6 4
♣ K 6

You are declarer at four spades, and receive a club opening. The ace is taken and a club return puts you in with the king.

The normal play might be to lead a heart to dummy and

SHOULD YOU MAKE SAFETY PLAYS?

finesse for the king of spades. However, percentage play is to lay down the ace of spades first. Then you lead to dummy and play a spade toward your queen. There is nothing to lose by this line of play; if East has the spade king you will still lose only as many tricks as you would have lost by finessing on the first round, and in no event can you escape the loss of at least one spade trick. You can afford to lose two spades and still make your contract. You will go down only if you lose three spade tricks, and this can happen only if you finesse the queen of spades on the first round and lose to a singleton king (or if West has four spades to the king, in which case you probably could not make your contract anyway). This, then, is a case in which you do not play as the majority do because their play cannot possibly give you an extra trick, and might cost you one.

Should You Make Safety Plays?

Such a play as the one in the foregoing hand comes under the head of safety plays, or percentage plays. Safety plays usually require the surrender of a trick which might have been won, in order to protect against the loss of an additional trick which you cannot afford. Such plays are rare in duplicate.

DUMMY

♠ Q 7
♥ 8 6
♦ A K Q 9 7 3
♣ 10 6 4

DECLARER

♠ K J 6
♥ K Q 10 5 3
♦ 8 5
♣ A K 3

You are declarer at three no-trump: the five of spades is opened, dummy plays the seven, East the ten and you win. Playing for total points your best bet would be to lead the eight of diamonds and, if West follows, to let it ride. Thus you would be sure of five diamond tricks even against a 4-1 break:

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

you could not go down. But you would be surrendering your chance for an extra trick if the diamonds break 3-2.

In duplicate bridge you do not make the safety play. You take the high diamonds and hope the suit will break. Most of the people in the game probably will not know the safety play, anyway, and will not try it. While you might get a top score by using the safety play if the diamonds are 4-1, twice out of three times the suit will divide evenly, all six of dummy's diamonds will be good, and you would get a very poor score if your safety play kept you from getting that overtrick.

A telling point in favour of this line of play in duplicate is that even if the diamonds don't break, there is a chance to make the contract anyway by setting up the heart suit in one lead.

Playing an Advantageous Contract

It should be noted that in the foregoing deal both the contract and the lead were normal. When you find yourself in a contract which is probably more advantageous than most pairs will reach, or when the opening lead is favourable to you and removes some dangers of loss which other declarers will have to face, your objective changes. Since at the very worst you will now get a good match-point score, you play as carefully as possible to win the tricks which are sure and you take no avoidable risk to add other tricks to them.

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH

♠ K J
♥ J 8 7 3
♦ Q J 8 5 2
♣ J 4

SOUTH

♠ A Q 10 9 4
♥ 6
♦ A 7 4
♣ A K 8 2

DECLARER'S PLAN

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 1 N-T | Pass |
| 3 ♣ | Pass | 3 ♦ | Pass |
| 4 ♦ | Pass | 4 ♠ | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |

West opened the deuce of hearts, East winning with the king and returning the four. South ruffed the second heart trick and evaluated his contract. He concluded that it was a good one, since some North-South pairs might play the hand at three no-trump, where they probably could not make an overtrick and might even go down. Since the best North-South score at no-trump would be plus 600, and South could score 620 by making four spades, he sought the safest way to make his contract.

Declarer's Plan

The best bet seemed to be to cash the two high clubs and the ace of diamonds, and then cross-ruff clubs and hearts; this would produce ten tricks. In the course of this cross-ruffing South could not safely hold on to the diamond ace and try a finesse by leading the diamond queen from dummy, because if the finesse lost West could stop the cross-ruff by leading a trump, and if spades broke badly the contract might even be defeated.

On this reasoning, South laid down the ace of diamonds immediately and was rewarded when the singleton king dropped from East's hand. Now South was able to draw trumps and by taking two finesses through West's ♦ 10 9 South won the remaining tricks, making his contract with two overtricks for a top score.

Four spades was the contract at two other tables, and in both cases only ten tricks were made. Declarer cashed the top clubs, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart, ruffed the last club, and then tried the diamond finesse. It won, but South could only make his three trumps since East had started with four trumps.

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Playing an Unusual Contract

When your appraisal of your contract leads you to the conclusion that you have overbid, or at least that you have reached a contract higher than most other pairs have reached, the making of the contract becomes all-important. Not even an 'opportunity' offered by the opening lead should be seized upon if there is any danger of losing the contract thereby.

DUMMY

♠ 9 8 3
♥ J 6 2
♦ 10 7
♣ A Q 8 6 3

DECLARER

♠ A K Q 10 7 6
♥ 9 3
♦ K J 4 3
♣ 7

The declarer in this case is at a four-spade contract, and receives a diamond opening. East takes the ace and returns a diamond, which declarer wins with the king.

The defenders might have taken two heart tricks if they had chosen to lead them; but their actual defence gives declarer an opportunity to finesse for the king of clubs and, if the finesse wins, to discard a losing heart. Declarer should decide, however, that some pairs playing his way will not reach the four-spade contract, because of the weakness of partner's hand. This being the case, declarer will have a very fine score if he merely makes his contract, and he should play in the safest possible way to make it. He plays the spade ace, and is rewarded when the jack drops. Now he gives up his chance for the club finesse, so that he may ruff two diamonds in dummy and, by cashing the club ace and ruffing a club, obtain the necessary entries back to his hand.

However, when you have overbid you should make every effort, no matter how far-fetched, to make the contract. Going down at all, when you are in a higher contract than the other pairs, will be a bad score. If by bold play you go down

PLAYING AGAINST A 'KILLING' LEAD

an extra trick, the loss will be negligible compared to what you can gain if you manage to bring the contract home. To paraphrase the previous example:

DUMMY

♠ 9 8 3
♥ J 6 2
♦ 10 7
♣ A Q 8 6 3

DECLARER

♠ A K Q 10 7
♥ 10 9 3
♦ A J 4 3
♣ 7

Again declarer finds himself in a four-spade contract, and again he is fortunate enough to get a diamond opening, winning the queen with his ace. Now, if he lets the opponents in it must be assumed that they will win three heart tricks and a diamond, and he will be down automatically. Other pairs playing the same way probably will not have reached four spades. Three spades, however, should be made; and it should not be possible for the opponents to make more than two or three hearts at their best contract, so that declarer's four-spade contract will yield few or no match-points if it goes down.

This being the case, declarer promptly takes a finesse for the king of clubs. If the finesse wins and the spades break he will probably make his contract. If the finesse loses and the opponents quickly take their three hearts and their diamonds, declarer will have gone down an extra trick by reason of the finesse, but his score cannot be much worse than it would have been had he played safe for down one.

Playing Against a 'Killing' Lead

When the contract is normal but the opening lead is unfavourable and apparently will make it possible for you to win fewer tricks than other pairs playing the same contract, it is usually necessary to take chances to regain your position.

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

NORTH

♠ K J 6 3
♥ K 9 5
♦ 9 7 3
♣ 10 9 7

SOUTH

♠ Q 5
♥ Q J
♦ A K Q 6 5 4 2
♣ A 5

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♠ | Pass |
| 2 N-T | Pass | 3 N-T | |

South's jump rebid to two no-trump is typical of duplicate-bridge tactics; playing for total points a safer and more accurate rebid would have been three diamonds, but South was unwilling to risk missing a final no-trump contract.

West opened the four of clubs and East played the king. Two things were immediately apparent: First, if West held five clubs the contract could be defeated whether South held up his ace for one round or not; all South could run was eight tricks, after which he would have to let the opponents in with one of the major-suit aces and they could take the setting tricks in clubs. The second thing that was apparent was that if West had opened either a spade or a heart (or if North were the declarer at a no-trump contract and received an opening in either of the major suits) North-South could wrap up four no-trump. The opening lead was therefore the most unfavourable possible, and South was justified in resorting to drastic measures to escape the consequences.

South's remedy was to win the first club trick and to lead the jack of hearts. He reasoned that if West held the heart ace, and if West's clubs were not solid (that is, if East had the club jack), West might pass the jack of hearts in the hope that it was a finesse. South was rewarded when everyone played low on the heart jack.

There arose at this point a condition which is quite common in declarer's play at duplicate bridge. Having come to a

PLAYING FOR OVERTRICKS

point at which he could surely make his contract, South had to stop and re-appraise the situation in comparison with what was probably happening to other pairs. South could assume that West held the ace of hearts—if East had had it, he would have taken it to continue clubs. South could also assume that West did not have the ace of spades, because if West had held both aces he would have taken the heart ace when it was offered to him.

If South ran off his tricks now and made three no-trump, he would beat the pairs playing his way who got a club opening and were not shrewd enough to lead the heart, or were not lucky enough to lead a heart instead of a spade (which East would have grabbed to lead a club), or who were not lucky enough to have West duck the first heart lead. If South still tried to make four no-trump, and led another heart or a spade, it would probably be taken and the clubs would be run. So South took the sure match-points by running off his no-trump game, instead of gambling by trying to sneak through another trick.

Playing for Overtricks

The most common situation in which declarer must appraise his contract carefully is when his side, in the bidding, has had a choice between a final major-suit or no-trump contract, and has chosen one rather than the other. The following example, because of the typical distribution of the partnership hands, is classic:

| | |
|----------|---------|
| DUMMY | |
| ♠ | A K J 6 |
| ♥ | Q 9 5 3 |
| ♦ | A Q J |
| ♣ | 7 4 |
| DECLARER | |
| ♠ | Q 8 4 |
| ♥ | A K 6 2 |
| ♦ | 10 9 6 |
| ♣ | K 9 5 |

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Declarer is in a three no-trump contract. A small club is opened, the ace goes up and the jack comes back.

It is obvious that declarer is not in the normal contract for the combined hands; with his four-card heart support, and with only a single club stopper, he should not have insisted on no-trump. Most pairs playing the same hand will be in a heart contract.

Since the ace of clubs was under the king, it is apparent that at hearts only one club trick would have to be lost; no spades; no hearts if that suit is divided 3-2. Depending on the diamond finesse, five or six-odd should be made at hearts. At no-trump, again if the hearts break, there are ten sure tricks and two diamond finesses will bring the total up to twelve tricks if they win.

Declarer cannot hold off on the clubs. He must not lose his chance to make six no-trump. He takes the club king and takes two rounds of hearts to see if that suit breaks, and it does. Now he must take a diamond finesse immediately. True, if the diamond finesse loses he will be held to three no-trump and may even go down; but it would not pay him to play safe for four no-trump by cashing his sure tricks. Whether five-odd were made at hearts for a score of plus 650, or six-odd for a score of plus 680, either will beat a score of 630 for making four no-trump. Declarer must play for the maximum—for the plus 690 he will get if he wins twelve tricks at no-trump. He must take the gamble immediately, because if he runs all the hearts and spades first he can take only one diamond finesse. It is all or nothing.

Now consider a similar hand in which the same problem arises:

DUMMY

♠ A K 7 5
♥ A Q 9 6 2
♦ 5 4
♣ 8 3

DECLARER

♠ Q 8 4
♥ K 8 7
♦ A Q 7 3
♣ K 7 6

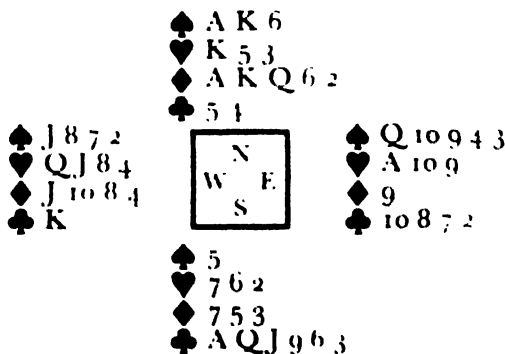
PLAYING FOR OVERTRICKS

Again declarer is in a three no-trump contract when four hearts would be more natural. The five of clubs is opened and the queen goes up, declarer winning with the king. The hearts are run, and break, and the spades are run, and also break.

Declarer has ten tricks. He can win twelve tricks by taking a diamond finesse, but if it loses to a blank king he will not get another trick and will be plus only 630. He has no reason to take this gamble. Since the ace of clubs is apparently over the king (judging from the opening lead and the play to it), the combined hands if played in a heart contract must lose two club tricks and can make only five hearts, for a score of 650. By playing safe for five no-trumps, declarer has a sure score of 660.

Frequently declarer's appraisal of his contract will tell him that his side has underbid, and has missed a game (or, in some cases, a slam). When this happens, and when it can be assumed that most or all of the other pairs will be in the preferable higher contract, it does no good to play for overtricks. Declarer must try to find some suppositious distribution of the cards which would cause the normal game contract to go down but which, if foreseen, will permit the part-score contract to be made. He then plays on the assumption that this distribution of the cards, no matter how far-fetched it may be, actually exists.

In short, declarer hopes the cards lie very badly. If they do, the pairs in higher contracts will suffer while he, in his too-low contract, will benefit.



DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

To South, whose contract is three clubs, it is more than apparent that North-South should be and at all other tables must be in three no-trump.

After West opens the heart queen, and the defenders take three heart tricks with East in the lead at the end, it is apparent that North would make three no-trump even if he lost the club finesse—unless both the clubs and the diamonds broke 4-1 and the club finesse lost. Except in these specific circumstances it does not matter whether South makes three clubs or not; he still cannot get any match-points.

South therefore proceeds on the assumption that West holds the king of clubs and that there is another club stopper out against the hand, except against double-dummy play. After winning the third heart East returns a diamond, which dummy wins. A club is led and South puts up the ace, which is the key play; for now he may return to a spade in dummy and finesse for the ten of clubs, drawing trumps and making four-odd. This beats not only the pairs that bid three no-trump and went down, but also whatever pairs stopped at two no-trump and made it on the nose.

It is only in cases of this sort that deliberately unnatural play—attempts to do something that other players will not do, rather than something that they probably will do—has no element of danger attached to it. South had to lose only the $\frac{1}{2}$ or 1 match-point he could have made if natural play had fulfilled his contract. He stood to gain as many match-points as constituted top on the board in that particular game.

Appraising the Opponents' Bid

When you are in a contract which has been reached by keenly competitive bidding—when you have taken the contract rather than let the opponents play it—your appraisal of your own contract must be joined by a realization of what probably would have happened to the opponents at their contract. Sometimes you will find that they could have made more than they bid, and in such a case it may be to your interest to play safe for a better score than you would have

APPRAISING THE OPPONENTS' BID

had if they had kept on bidding. At other times you will find that you could have defeated them for a plus score, in which case you must take desperate chances to make your contract and get your plus score anyway. And in still other cases you must play the entire hand on the assumption that you calculated correctly in the bidding, since you will not get any match-points anyway if you miscalculated.

The following striking application of this principle is taken from an excellent article written by Charles Goosmann, Jr., for *The Bridge World Magazine*:

North, dealer
Both sides vulnerable

NORTH
 ♠ 10 8 4 2
 ♥ 5 4 2
 ♦ K 9
 ♣ 9 5 4 3

SOUTH
 ♠ A K J 9 5
 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ A 8
 ♣ 10 7 6 2

The bidding:

| NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|-------|------|-------|--------|
| Pass | Pass | 1 ♠ | Double |
| 2 ♠ | 3 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♥ |
| Pass | Pass | 4 ♠ | Double |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

South bid four spades, obviously, on the assumption that the opposing four-heart contract could not be defeated (because North's raise over the double showed a weak hand) but that with trump support in North's hand he would be unlikely to go down more than two at four spades—a loss of 500 points when the opposing four-heart contract would have cost him 620.

West started off by taking three club tricks, then led the ace and another heart. East won the second heart and led a third round, which South trumped. South was now down 500 already. To hold the set at that figure he had to win the

DECLARER'S PLAY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

remaining tricks, which meant that he must capture the spade queen either by dropping it or by finessing for it. If he lost to the spade queen he would be down 800, a highly unprofitable sacrifice against a vulnerable game and consequently a poor match-point score.

In this case there is no question as to South's proper play. He cashes the ace of spades, leads a low diamond to dummy's king, and takes a finesse for the queen. This play is forced by an appraisal of the opponents' previous bids. East-West bid four hearts; at this contract they had to lose two diamonds and one spade trick to which both of them have already followed. If the spades were divided 2-2, so that the queen would drop, it would mean that North-South could win four tricks against the four-heart contract and defeat it. In this event a score of minus 500 would be just as bad for North-South as a score of minus 800—in either case they would be sacrificing against a contract that could not be made. Therefore South had to assume that one of his opponents held a singleton spade, so that at four hearts only two diamonds and one spade would have been lost and the plus 620 contract would have been made.

CHAPTER XIII

LEADS AND DEFENDERS' PLAY

The outstanding characteristic of defensive play in duplicate bridge is that you can never relax. There is almost no such thing as an unimportant contract. If they are playing two clubs against you, don't let them make three!

The defenders must first appraise the contract, just as declarer does. More often than not it is a contract that has been thrust upon them. They had nothing to do with the bidding of it, and cannot appraise it from that standpoint. Before the opening lead, they can only guess as to whether it is a good contract or a bad one for their side. Even after the dummy has been displayed, they cannot ever have quite as clear a picture as declarer can; they cannot see each other's hands. Nevertheless, it is even more important to the defenders than to declarer to be accurate in their appraisal.

For example, declarer is to play a slam contract. If the contract is a laydown, but there is one trick the defenders can win, they must grab it fast—failure to do so will give declarer an overtrick and them a poor score. But if the slam cannot be made against proper defence, failure to defeat it will give the defenders almost a bottom—and grabbing a sure trick too fast may be just what is needed to let declarer come through. These are problems the defenders must solve, almost in the blind. It is the hardest job in duplicate bridge, and a brilliant defensive player has a tremendous advantage.

When to Give Up

One of the first things the inveterate rubber-bridge player must learn in duplicate bridge is to give up gracefully. If the

LEADS AND DEFENDERS' PLAY

opponents are obviously going to make their contract, except through some miracle, the best duplicate-bridge policy is to refrain from hoping that the miracle will occur, and to let them make it. There are few cases in duplicate bridge in which a 'desperation lead' is proper. The characteristic of the desperation lead is that it risks an unimportant overtrick or two to grasp at a bare hope of defeating the contract. In duplicate bridge those overtricks are not unimportant.

East-West vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 1 N-T | Pass |
| 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 N-T | Pass |
| 3 N-T | Pass | Pass | Pass |

East's hand:

♠ J 8 4 ♥ K 9 ♦ 10 6 5 2 ♣ J 10 3 2

The deuce of diamonds is a safe lead, but one which will seldom defeat the contract. In rubber bridge, the king of hearts proves to be a good lead; partner happens to have five hearts to the queen-jack and an outside entry, and the heart suit happens to break. If his heart holding had not been so ideal, the lead might have cost a trick. In duplicate bridge this trick is not worth risking.

Fancy or tricky leads, no matter how closely figured, are also of dubious value at duplicate bridge. The opening lead of a king from K-J-10-x-x, in the hope of dropping a singleton queen in dummy, is often good and sometimes brilliant when total points and not match-points are the objective. It is a bold stroke to establish a suit fast, perhaps at the cost of a trick if the lead does not work. The skilful rubber-bridge player recognizes the fact that it does not work often, but that it is worth while to lose a trick now and then for the chance of defeating a game contract. The duplicate-bridge player cannot afford to gamble away those extra tricks.

Conservatism in Opening Leads

All things considered, it is the hidebound conservative who

CONSERVATISM IN OPENING LEADS

is likely to do best on the opening lead in duplicate. Either the best suit, or a neutral lead, against no-trump; a safe sequence against a suit bid. The time for more fancy play is when the dummy has gone down and the close figurer can exploit his talents. Very few people can figure very closely from the bidding alone.

Even closer figuring is required to execute such plays as the exit, the unblock and other manœuvres which risk the loss of a trick. In such cases as the following (which is a standard) it sometimes costs the duplicate player dearly to be a sucker, but in the long run the sucker is likely to get better match-point scores than the wise guy.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>♠ Q 10 5 ♥ 7 6 ♦ J 10 5 3 ♣ K J 8 5</p> | <p>♠ A 9 4 2 ♥ Q J 9 5 ♦ Q 9 ♣ A 6 2</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 10px;"> N W E S </div> | <p>♠ K 6 ♥ 10 3 ♦ 8 7 6 2 ♣ Q 10 9 4 3</p> |
| <p>♠ J 8 7 3 ♥ A K 8 4 2 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 7</p> | | | |

The contract is six hearts, against which West opens a heart. South draws trumps in two rounds and leads a low spade to dummy's ace. Of course, East's 'book' play is to throw the king under the ace. If he does not, South will strip the hand by ruffing out dummy's clubs and cashing the high diamonds, and will then throw East in with a spade and force a lead on which South can get a ruff and discard.

At rubber bridge, the play of the king of spades is automatic. At duplicate bridge it is not so easy, and I sometimes wonder if it is even right. Unless you know your opponent is a shrewd and a skilful player, it may be unwise to credit him with too much subtlety, especially when it come to giving up a sure trick, which is a precious commodity in a duplicate game.

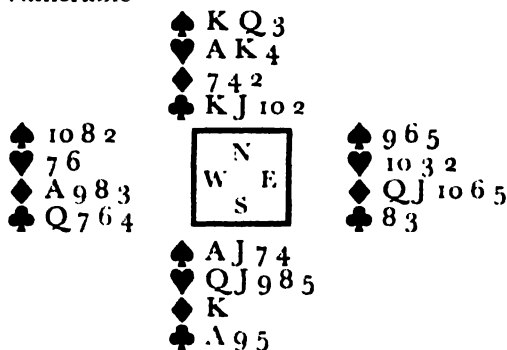
LEADS AND DEFENDERS' PLAY

Cashing an Ace against a Slam

A bare chance to defeat a slam is often surrendered in favour of the greater probability that failure to cash an ace in time will lose the ace.

North dealer

Neither side vulnerable



The bidding:

| NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 ♥ | Pass | 2 ♠ | Pass |
| 3 ♥ | Pass | 5 ♥ | Pass |
| 6 ♥ | Pass | Pass | Pass |

A tournament was won because the holder of the West cards in this deal laid down the ace of diamonds against a slam contract. North had bid clubs, and South had shown at least nine cards in spades and hearts. There was a danger that whatever diamonds South might have would go off on North's clubs. The player who cashed the ace of diamonds held the opposing team to six hearts, even though the location of the club queen was guessed. If the diamond ace were not opened, the location of the club queen would still be guessed but South's king of diamonds would go off on North's fourth club, and South would make seven.

This does not mean that an ace is a preferred lead against a slam. If the slam is made against you, saving the overtrick may not make much difference. The slam will be missed at

FALSECARDING BY DEFENDERS

some tables, and you will probably get a poor score no matter what you do. But leading the ace is advisable when the slam is reached comfortably by skilful bidders and when it is apparent that a good side suit exists on which declarer will have ample opportunity to discard a loser if it is not taken from him at once.

Falsecarding by Defenders

Falsecarding is a valuable and effective stratagem in duplicate bridge, and follows the same logical principles as in any form of contract bridge: It must be done only when it cannot hurt to fool partner and may be valuable to fool declarer.

DUMMY

♠ 8 2
♥ 8 4 3
♦ A Q 10 9 7
♣ K 9 5

EAST

♠ Q 7 6
♥ J 8 5 2
♦ K J 4
♣ 8 6 3

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♦ | Pass |
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 2 ♦ | Pass |
| 2 N-T | Pass | 3 ♣ | Pass |
| 3 N-T | Pass | Pass | Pass |

West opens the five of spades, East plays the queen and South wins with the ace. South then leads a diamond and finesses dummy's nine. It is a good gamble for East, in a match-point game, to win with the king. He will then lead a spade and South (who is more or less marked with the king of spades, from the fact that he failed to hold up) must observe the match-point exigencies of the occasion, win the spade immediately and take another diamond finesse in the belief that he is about to make one or more overtricks. If he does this, East-West may defeat the three no-trump contract; whereas if South had held up on the second round of spades

LEADS AND DEFENDERS' PLAY

they could not even have held declarer to three no-trump. (South would, of course, hold up on the second round of spades if the first diamond finesse lost to the jack.)

But a good defender in duplicate bridge must remember to be neither greedy nor unduly hopeful. He must trust the opponents' bidding enough to credit them with the cards their bidding has shown. In such cases he must give up gracefully.

North dealer
East-West vulnerable

DUMMY

♠ 10 5 4
♥ Q 7
♦ A K Q 10 5 2
♣ K 10

EAST

♠ Q 9
♥ A 3 2
♦ 7 4 3
♣ A Q 7 3 2

The bidding:

| NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 ♦ | Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass |
| 4 ♥ | Pass | Pass | Pass |

On this occasion West opens the six of spades, and East's queen falls to South's ace. South leads the five of hearts and puts up dummy's queen, and East wins with the ace. The rubber-bridge player would hope that West might have the jack of hearts, and would hang on to that club tenace in the hope that West would get in to lead through dummy's king. The duplicate player must succumb. South probably has solid hearts and the king of spades; any losers in his hand will go off on the diamonds. East has only one possible play—the ace of clubs. If he takes the club ace, he will hold South to five. If he does not take the club ace, he will have that vital overtrick made against him: for South's hand was:

♠ A K 3 ♥ K J 10 8 5 ♦ 6 ♣ 9 5 4 3

CHAPTER XIV

PSYCHOLOGY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

The rubber-bridge player who wanders into a duplicate-bridge game shortly discovers to his amazement the outstanding feature of duplicate play: The sequence of deals, as they come up one by one, are in no way related to one another.

In rubber bridge it hurts mightily to take a set of 1,100 points. The average rubber is less than 1,000 points, and the average rubber consists of five and a fraction deals. Therefore, when you go down 1,100 points you have lost six or more deals. In a duplicate game no one deal, whatever its result in terms of total points, can possibly amount to any more than one other deal. Going down 1,100 is no worse than going down 200 and then discovering to your dismay that the opponents could have made at most four diamonds, worth 130.

So the first lesson for a would-be winner in a duplicate game is this: When you get a bottom, forget about it. You had a top two or three rounds ago—remember? The two balance each other; you are average on the two boards put together. The boards coming up are new deals, unrelated to the ones that have gone before. The only thing that will really hurt your score is remembering, rehashing and brooding about the ones that got away.

Estimating Your Match-Point Score

An expert duplicate player has a pretty good idea of where he stands on every board he plays. At every stage of the game

PSYCHOLOGY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

he knows whether he is above average, below average, or just about average. Sometimes a good estimator, at the end of a long session, can guess his final score within a point or two.

The first step in estimating is to know what is average on each board. Average is always half the top score, and top score is one less than the number of tables in play. Thus, in a ten-table game, 9 match-points are maximum on a board and $4\frac{1}{2}$ match-points are average on a board.

After each hand, you will be able to view all four hands around the table, and this should tell you the best possible result for your side. If you have appraised the field properly, you will also know what a normal result for your side would be—that is, what the other pairs playing in your direction have probably done.

If you have done the best you could do on your cards, on a board which has produced some competitive bidding and on which there is some choice as to your final contract or the play of it, you estimate a better-than-average score—about one match-point above average in a seven or eight-table game and about two points above average in a ten- or twelve-table game.

If you have made a mistake, or landed in a slightly inferior contract, you take a below-average score.

And if the hand is a cut-and-dried one on which you have done as well as possible, but have had no problems—for example, a hand on which a four-spade contract is easy to reach and can hardly fail to be made—you take an average score.

Are You an Optimist or a Pessimist?

Be chary of counting on getting a top unless your score is something completely out of the ordinary— as, for example, if you set the opponents 1,400 when you could not make a slam. It's safer to estimate about one match-point less than top—8 match-points instead of 9, in a ten-table game. Likewise avoid being too downhearted when you have a seemingly bad score. If you miss a sure slam in a ten-table game,

PARTNERSHIP UNDERSTANDING

you should still expect to get a couple of points. There will be others who miss it too.

Should you be an optimist or a pessimist in estimating your score? Nothing I can tell you will make you any different from what you are. If you are a natural optimist, you'll usually estimate a few more points for yourself than you are going to wind up with. If you are a natural pessimist, you'll often think you are below average for the session when actually you have won the game. And you will probably never change.

If travelling score slips are used in your game, you will be able to estimate with greater accuracy from the halfway point on. If a board has been played four times before it comes to you, and you find that your score has beaten two of the other pairs and lost to two of them, you have two out of four possible points—exactly average. You will probably wind up the evening with about an average on that board, even if it has four or five more rounds to go.

It should go without saying that you must not delay the game with your estimating. Don't try to analyse the first board of a round before you have played the second. After the second board is finished, if the change has not been called, you will have time to take the hands out of the first board and examine them again.

Partnership Understanding

Most important in a duplicate game is agreement and understanding between partners. If you are playing the system recommended in this book, which consists in opening the bidding every time you have a bid—even a light one—and raising when you have a raise, and overcalling or doubling when you have an overcall or a double, partnership understanding will be enhanced if you stick by your system. Do not make your partner wonder if this time you have suddenly become timid and failed to bid when you should have.

Don't bid when you don't have a bid, and don't fail to bid when you do have one. Then your partner will never be in

any doubt as to what you have—and, more important, he will never be in doubt as to what you don't have.

Fancy Tactics

Traditionally, third hand is the ideal position for psyching. To bid a worthless hand in third position, **just** because it is a good position for psyching, is likely to prove as unprofitable as any unsystematic procedure. It is true that you can often bid third hand when you would not wish to bid in any other position. Whenever you do make such a bid, however, you should have a reason for it. You should be either calling a lead or preparing for a sacrifice.

The following is a stupid third-hand bid of one diamond:

♠ K 6 ♥ 9 3 2 ♦ 10 8 7 5 4 2 ♣ J 6

You don't want your partner to lead a diamond and you don't have a bid. The following is an excellent third-hand bid of one diamond, regardless of the vulnerability:

♠ K 6 ♥ 9 3 2 ♦ K Q 10 8 6 2 ♣ J 6

When you hold such a hand, you would rather have a diamond lead than any other if the opponents play at no-trump; you are prepared to play in diamonds; and if the opponents decided to trap you and pass your diamond bid, you in turn are prepared to pass your partner's response whatever it is and wait for a double before you rebid your diamonds.

As a rule, however, fancy tactics in duplicate bridge are warranted only when there is no doubt as to who will play the hand. When there is no doubt in your mind but that your side will get the final contract, you may make fancy bids to forestall an undesirable opening or to misguide the opponents on the defence.

♠ A Q 7 6 ♥ K Q 8 2 ♦ A K ♣ 6 3 2

You bid one spade on this hand, and partner responds two hearts. I do not say that I recommend a three-club bid, but

CUE-BIDS, HONEST AND FAKE

I would not call it unintelligent. Both opponents have passed; partner has bid a suit you can support heavily. You are justified in believing that your partner will eventually play some heart contract. The three-club bid will be kept open (it may not be forcing, but in view of partner's two-over-one response he will not pass it) and it may forestall a club lead which would be embarrassing.

If there were any possibility that the opponents would play the hand, such a bid would be stupid. It might cause partner to open a club and thus throw away one or more tricks.

Cue-Bids, Honest and Fake

Such a hand as this one offers a good opportunity to a non-vulnerable player to prepare either for a sacrifice or for defence against an opposing game contract:

♠ 6 3 ♥ Q J 10 8 5 ♦ Q 10 8 7 5 4 ♣ — —

East holds the above hand, with his opponents vulnerable, and the bidding goes:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
| 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♣ | |

East bids three clubs. As a non-vulnerable bid it is not very dangerous. West may have enough of a heart or diamond suit to find a sacrifice. If South ends at a spade contract, a club opening may gain a trick in defence.

So the opportunity arises to use the double-cross on a similar hand:

♠ 6 ♥ Q J 10 8 5 ♦ Q 10 8 7 5 4 ♣ 2

Again the hand is held by a non-vulnerable East, against an opening spade bid and two-club response. East bids three clubs with a double purpose: The sacrifice opportunity is still there, and by pretending to be in a position to ruff clubs, he may discourage North-South from bidding a slam, if it should happen that they can make one.

PSYCHOLOGY IN DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Obstructive Bids in Duplicate

Especially when vulnerability conditions are favourable to the opponents, good players look for stratagems to discourage their opponents from seeking, and perhaps finding, a good spot for a sacrifice. The following example is typical; in the fastest company it has become hackneyed by too-constant use and fools no one for very long, but it is still effective.

North-South vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 2 N-T | |

North holds:

♠ 7 ♥ K Q 10 6 3 ♦ Q J 8 4 ♣ A 3 2

North fears that East may have a spade suit which he will bid if not discouraged, and at four or five spades East-West may possibly have a good sacrifice contract. So North bids two no-trump to advertise general strength, which he does not have because he lacks spades. North will eventually return to hearts, of course, and after another round of bidding everyone at the table will probably know exactly what North was up to, and exactly what sort of hand he has. But by that time it will probably be too late for East to come in with a spade bid, and at the time North makes his two no-trump bid neither East nor any other player can know whether or not the bid is genuine.

Out-and-Out Psychics

A bluff bid in a weak suit may be attempted when, from your hand, it appears that the opponents, rather than your side, will surely play the hand:

East-West vulnerable

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Double | 1 ♠ | |

North holds:

♠ J 6 3 ♥ 10 8 5 4 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 6 2

OUT-AND-OUT PSYCHICS

Again I say that I do not recommend North's one-spade bid, but I grant the logic of it. If doubled at one spade, North has sufficient support for diamonds to return to that suit. It appears that East-West will play the hand, solely because North is so weak; and the bluff spade bid may succeed in driving them out of their best suit.

Stratagems of this sort, and their effectiveness, depend almost entirely upon the person who employs them and the people he is playing against. The art of beguiling one's opponent cannot be taught; I will not attempt to teach it. In duplicate bridge as in any other competition, or as in life, it is a knack and a talent. I endeavour only to warn my readers away from juvenile tactics which would not succeed even in the hands of a master of deception against the most ingenuous of opponents.

CHAPTER XV

TEAM-OF-FOUR AND INDIVIDUAL GAMES

Total-point scoring is no longer much used in duplicate games. In a pair match, total-point scoring has to produce two winners, one North-South and one East-West; so it was promptly dropped as soon as the 'scrambled Mitchell' was developed, permitting eighteen or more pairs to play a game of reasonable length and still produce a single winning pair. In tournaments for teams of four, match-point scoring is equally a matter of convenience: Two or three sessions are sufficient to decide a match-point team tournament, while three to six days are necessary when total-point scoring is used.

It is a pity that circumstances have acted to eliminate total-point scoring from general use. Total-point duplicate is closest in character to rubber bridge. A total-point team-of-four match is the best test of skill that bridge players have yet devised. For eight people who want to play duplicate bridge at home, a total-point team-of-four match is incomparably the finest of games: The length of the match can be adjusted to the exact number of hours available for play and no tournament director or scorer or guide cards or schedules or scoring equipment is needed.

Comparison with Rubber Bridge

I stated previously that the strategy of bidding and play in total-point duplicate is almost exactly the same as the strategy of bidding and play in rubber bridge--almost, but still not quite. The two differences are:

YOUR 'OPPOSITE NUMBER'

First, every hand at rubber bridge is part of a never-ending series of deals, the series you will encounter over the course of your entire bridge-playing lifetime. The fact that you are ahead or behind on the score for any particular evening does not affect your correct bid or play. You should not take a dangerous gamble to recoup your losses, because in the long run the gamble stands to cost you points and to lower your lifetime standing. Lose two dollars to-night if you must, because you can get it back next time. To risk a ten-dollar loss for the chance of winding up fifty cents ahead will be costly in the long run.

But in total-point duplicate, every match is a complete and self-sufficient unit and the object is to win the match. If you must lose it, it does not particularly matter how much the margin of loss is. Therefore, total-point duplicate is strategically identical with rubber bridge only at the beginning of the match. As play progresses, and you can judge from your results how you probably stand, your strategy changes: You avoid risk if you are leading, and court risk if you are behind.

Your 'Opposite Number'

The second difference between the two games is in the human element. In rubber bridge there is no relationship between your table and any other, while in total-point duplicate there is direct comparison between the results at your table and at the other table where the same hands are being played. Seated in your place at the other table, and holding the same cards you hold, is another player whom you know. Throughout the match you must keep in mind what your 'opposite number' (as our British cousins would call him) is likely to be doing with the cards you hold.

In total-point as well as in match-point duplicate, it seldom pays to play for swings, unless and until the condition of the score makes it imperative that you do so. The most successful players strive for soundness, and wait until an opposing error gives them a chance to pick up points. They do not make gambling bids designed to win the match on a single hand,

TEAM-OF-FOUR AND INDIVIDUAL GAMES

because that same bid may lose the match on the same hand.

So, when you have a good idea what your 'opposite number' will do on a certain hand, it is not a bad idea to go along with him and thus to minimize the possible swing. For example, you find yourself fourth hand after three passes: you are vulnerable, and you hold:

♠ A K x x ♥ J x ♦ K 10 x x ♣ x x x

This hand isn't quite a bid, in rubber bridge, consequently (since the basic bidding requirements are the same in the two games) it isn't quite a bid in total-point duplicate. But if you know that the same hand will be held by an opponent who has a match-point philosophy, and who wouldn't dream of passing such cards fourth hand, go ahead and bid a spade. Why not? At the worst you should break even with the opposing team. At best, you will find that your side can make a part-score and that 90 to 140 points might have been lost if you had passed. (Of course, you'll pass your partner's response to one spade, whatever it is.)

This matching of the opponents' methods should be used only in borderline cases. If carried to extremes, it is a losing policy. Weaken the cards you hold fourth hand, so you have something like this:

♠ Q J x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ x x x ♣ J x

and it becomes unsound to bid. If your match-point-minded friend chooses to bid on such hands, it is all to the good; it will be on such hands that sooner or later you will pile up a lead.

In the total-point duplicate, honours count. Especially in a close match, they are likely to count enough to sway the result. Therefore you give more thought to honours than you do even in rubber bridge. You hold this hand:

♠ J x x ♥ A K Q 10 ♦ A 10 9 x ♣ x x

and bid one heart. Your partner responds two clubs. Both opponents have passed. In rubber bridge your next bid would be two diamonds, for your goal would be safety above all. In

BIDDING FOR HONOURS

a team-of-four match you would bid two hearts. Your partner may have a weak hand on which he will pass either bid, and if so you would rather be in hearts. If your partner has a strong hand, the heart rebid is unlikely to get you in trouble.

This is an especially clear-cut case, because when the major-minor scoring differential is added to the count for honours, the swing becomes of considerable importance. The difference between making three hearts with 100 honours (plus 240) and three diamonds without honours (plus 110) is about as great as the difference between making a part-score contract and going down one.

Choice Between a Doubtful Game with Honours and a Safe Game Without

When there is a question between bidding a doubtful game in a suit with honours, and a safer game in a suit without honours, it becomes necessary to count the possible loss and compare it with the points that the honours will give you. The following deal came up in a team-of-four match:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| ♠ A 6 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ 8 7 5 2 ♣ Q 10 7 4 | <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 5px;"> N W E S </div> | ♠ 8 3 ♥ 9 6 4 2 ♦ A 10 9 6 ♣ J 6 5 |
| ♠ K J 9 7 5 4 ♥ 7 5 ♦ J 4 ♣ A K 3 ♠ Q 10 ♥ A Q J 10 8 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ 9 8 2 | | |

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 ♠ | Pass |
| 2 ♥ | Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass |
| 4 ♥ | Pass | Pass | Pass |

South's four-heart bid was an out-and-out gamble to score the honours. North's jump rebid had made it clear that spades would be a good trump suit.

TEAM-OF-FOUR AND INDIVIDUAL GAMES

West opened the four of clubs and dummy won. The jack of diamonds was hastily led, and East put up the ace and returned a heart. South won with the ace of hearts, led to the ace of clubs, took his two high diamonds for a club discard, and trumped his losing club. Then he led a spade to get back to his own hand.

West took the ace of spades and led his last club, on which East was able to ditch his second spade. This lead shortened South's trumps so that when West got in again (with the heart king) and led a diamond, East was left with a long trump and the setting trick.

South could have played better, but this did not alter the fact that four spades would have been made easily.

How bad was South's losing gamble? The answer depends partly on vulnerability. In total-point duplicate it costs more to lose a vulnerable game than to lose a non-vulnerable game.

Not vulnerable, the game bonus is 300. The part-score bonus is 50. If you stop short of a game you could have made, you have lost only 250 points; if you go down at a game contract when you could have made a part-score, you lose the value of the part-score, 140, plus the 50-point set, a total of 190. It is very close to an even shot, with the advantage slightly on the side of aggressiveness.

But when you are vulnerable and miss a game, you lose 450 (the difference between the 500 for game and the 50 for a part-score) while if you go down at a game when you could have made a part-score, you lose 140 plus a 100-point set, a total loss of 240. Here it is very close to two-to-one in favour of gambling for the game.

Likewise, in gambling for honours, you can afford to take more chances when you are not vulnerable; the loss, if the gamble fails, will be less. When vulnerable, take the sure game.

Will you be Doubled?

The danger of being doubled must be considered on any doubtful bid, as in rubber bridge. Sometimes it is wise to try for a game which may even go down two tricks, if the bidding

WILL YOU BE DOUBLED?

and your hand are such that neither opponent will be likely to double. For example, after this bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♣ |
| 2 ♥ | 3 ♣ | 3 ♥ | Pass |

South might bid four hearts on this hand:

♠ x x ♥ A Q J x x x ♦ K x x ♣ A x

North's failure to give a free raise shows that he does not have a great deal in high cards, and the four-heart contract might not make. But neither opponent has bid very strongly, and neither can have much in hearts, so the four-heart contract will not be doubled. If North's strength, such as it is, happens to fit with South's the game will be made. Whether vulnerable or not, the probable maximum penalty (100 or 200 points, respectively) is not too much to risk in exchange for the chance at the game bonus.

When there is a chance that the opponents can be defeated two tricks or more at the final contract (which is to say, at a contract which you must either pass or double) it is costly in total-point duplicate to overlook any doubling opportunities. The penalties mount up rapidly. Not vulnerable, a three-trick set is an insignificant 150 points if not doubled, and an important 500 points if doubled. Vulnerable, there is a 300-point loss in letting the opponents take an undoubled two-trick set. Close doubles in total-point play are not excessively costly when the contract is made, provided the doubler can be sure there will be no overtricks, and provided he is sure there can be no redouble. An example with both sides vulnerable:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 ♠ | Pass |
| 1 N-T | Pass | 2 ♦ | Pass |
| 2 N-T | Pass | 3 N-T | Pass |
| Pass | Double | | |

West held:

♠ J x ♥ K J x x ♦ J 10 9 x ♣ K Q x

TEAM-OF-FOUR AND INDIVIDUAL GAMES

Count his honour-tricks and he has no double; but consider the bidding and he has. Neither opponent appears to fit the other's suits. South has no strong hand; his first rebid was a weak no-trump. North has no strong hand; his two-diamond bid over one no-trump could have been passed, and with a powerful hand opposite an opening bid he would have forced. Redoubles of doubled no-trump contracts are inspired by long, solid suits; neither North nor South can have such a suit, on the bidding. If South happens to squeeze out three no-trump, the double will cost West only 150 points; but if South goes down two or three tricks, *failure* to double will cost West 300 or 500 points.

Watching the Score

Constantly controlling team-of-four strategy is the condition of the score. This can be judged in two ways: First, from the comparison which usually takes place halfway of the match, and which permits all players to know how they start at the beginning of the second half. Also, from a player's own judgment of the results of the deals he has already played—whether his side has picked up points or has lost points on them.

Nothing is more discouraging than holding weak hands against which the opponents make an unbroken series of games and slams. Your score may show you to be 3,000 or 4,000 points minus at your table, and you may humanly reach the conclusion that you are doing badly and must take chances to catch up. But it is a great mistake to be too pessimistic in such situations. Your team-mates, at the other table, will be holding the same good cards that your opponents hold against you, and will have the same opportunity to pile up a big plus score of their own. The only time to feel that you are behind is when you have scored fewer points than your cards have entitled you to score, or when by bad defence you have let your opponents score undeservedly.

Don't Gamble on Freaks

When far behind you must gamble somewhat to get swings. *But more the unusual the hands the less you need to gamble.* Freaks, game hands and slam hands offer constant opportunities for swings; if you are 2,000 or so behind and such a series of hands comes up, play conservatively and soundly and hope that at one table or the other your opponents will slip.

The need for desperate tactics arises principally when you are about 2,000 behind and encounter a run of prosaic part-score hands which offer few scoring opportunities for either side. Such hands produce no big swings, and if in the course of the dull series one big hand should come up, you will have to stretch a point to reach a small or grand slam and win back a sizable package of points all at once.

Grand Slam on a Finesse

Gambling on slams should not be overdone, however. About the farthest you should go is to bid a grand slam which depends on a finesse, when in normal circumstances you would stop at six. Always remember that you cannot tell what is happening at the other table, and the very fact that a slam hand comes along means that there is an opportunity to pick up 1,000 or 1,500 points. I have seen cases in which one pair reached a vulnerable small slam in the wrong suit, went down one, and would have lost 1,530 points if at the other table the same hand had not been stretched to a grand slam, down one.

One thing you must do when you are behind: Bid aggressively in all cases. Any doubtful games should be bid. If there are no games in the hands, you probably cannot overcome the opponents' lead anyway.

Be Bold When Ahead

When you are far ahead, your guiding principles are: Bid aggressively; and avoid any risk of a big swing against you.

TEAM-OF-FOUR AND INDIVIDUAL GAMES

The principle that you should be aggressive when ahead is a very logical one. Just as you know you are ahead, your opponents know they are behind. Your 'opposite number' at the other table will be careful to bid all close games and slams, because otherwise he cannot win the match. By bidding such hands exactly as he does, you prevent his gaining on you: If the game or slam makes, you score as much as he does and maintain your lead. If the game or slam goes down and you get a minus score, so will your opponents get a minus score and you still maintain your lead. When ahead you are never interested in picking up more points. All you want to do is keep the lead you have, or enough of it to win.

Avoid Swings

The avoidance of big swings is especially important when you have a big lead. Suppose you were 1,500 points ahead at the half, and have not thrown away any large number of points since. Then, with North-South vulnerable, this bidding occurs:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ | 3 ♥ | 3 ♠ |
| 4 ♣ | 4 ♠ | 4 N-T | 5 ♠ |
| 7 ♥ | | | |

You are West, and hold:

♠ K Q J 10 x x x x ♥ Q x x ♦ — ♣ x x

Maybe your queen of hearts will win a trick and defeat the grand slam; maybe South will have a two-way guess as to which way to finesse for the queen of hearts. If so, the guess may be made correctly against you, for a score of 2,210, and your team-mates may misguess it and go down. This would toss away the match on a single board. It is far safer to avoid even the possibility of such a large swing by bidding seven spades, at which contract you can hardly go down more than 400 points. At least, the 400 points cannot cost you the match.

When the match is very close, it comes to resemble match-

BOARD-A-MATCH PLAY

point play. You play all hands for over-tricks, since 20 points here and 30 points there may decide the result. You reopen the bidding as you would in a match-point game, rather than let the opponents score 110 when you could go down only 50. National championship contests have been decided by margins of 10 points.

Board-a-Match Play

In team-of-four play with match-point scoring, every board represents one point, and—as in a match-point pair game—there is no relationship between any two boards. Win one board by 10 points, lose another by 2,000 points, and you will have broken even on the two.

The strategy of board-a-match play is not identical with that of duplicate pair play, however. There is no 'field' to consider. Your score will be compared only with the score of one other pair.

Therefore you do not have cases in which you already have a good match-point score, and you refuse even the slightest gamble to make your match-point score better. In board-a-match games you play specifically to beat—or not to lose to—one other team.

| |
|---------------|
| NORTH |
| ♠ 10 6 3 |
| ♥ A K Q J 8 5 |
| ♦ 8 4 |
| ♣ 7 2 |
| SOUTH |
| ♠ Q 8 5 |
| ♥ 7 2 |
| ♦ A Q 6 5 |
| ♣ K Q J 5 |

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 1 N-T | Pass | 3 N-T | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

West opens a low club and East plays the ace, returning a club. South cannot fail to make four no-trump at this point.

TEAM-OF-FOUR AND INDIVIDUAL GAMES

The question is, should he eventually risk the diamond finesse?

In a pair game, such a finesse would be pointless. North's jump to three no-trump, though correct, is unusual. Many players holding such a beautiful heart suit would get to a four-heart contract on the North hand. No score made at four hearts could beat the 630 points for four no-trump. With six or more match-points assured (on the basis of a 10-point top), South would take the guaranteed score at four no-trump.

But in a board-a-match game no points are guaranteed. One's result depends on what happens at one other table. Before settling for ten tricks at no-trump, South must decide what is probably happening at that table. Are the opposing North-South pair the sort that will reach a no-trump contract, or will they be in hearts? What suit will be opened against them? Will they finesse in diamonds and perhaps make five-odd at no-trump? South has no invariably correct play in such a situation.

Individual Games

An individual tournament is nothing more or less than a pair game. Nevertheless, there are different circumstances which must be kept in mind.

First, there is the fact that the partnerships will seldom be so good in an individual game as in a pair game. In a pair game the players pick their own partners and presumably the ones with whom they play well. In an individual game the player takes his partners as they come.

Thus, the field should not be expected to reach the best final contract with a great regularity as in a pair game; there will be more tragedies due to partnership misunderstandings. Conservatism is the winning player's keynote. 'Playing for averages' pays better than it does in pair competition. A score which would be average in a pair game will usually turn out to be better than average in an individual game, because some pair or other will have run into trouble.

The other quality of the winning player in an individual

INDIVIDUAL GAMES

tournament is adaptability to different partners; and this means no fancy bids, no delicate meanings that a good player *ought* to interpret, but may not. Make everything as easy for your partner to read as possible; remember above all things that although you may be confident and at ease playing with him, he may not be equally at ease with you.

CHAPTER XVI

APPLYING THE LAWS OF DUPLICATE

The laws of duplicate contract bridge are in most respects identical with the rubber-bridge laws as regards procedure and the remedies for irregularities in bidding and play. But the organization, conduct and scoring of tournaments require legislation on a great many matters that never arise in rubber bridge.

The spirit of the duplicate laws necessarily differs from the spirit of the rubber-bridge laws, in application if not in phrasing. The fundamental difference is this: whenever an irregularity occurs in a duplicate game, *the interests of the entire field must be considered.*

To illustrate this: Pair 7 plays against Pair 3. Pair 7 reaches a grand slam contract which is obviously unmakeable because Pair 3 holds the ace of trumps. But Pair 3 revokes, and the penalty provided by law would give Pair 7 its grand slam and a top on the board.

It is obvious that Pair 3 deserves no consideration; it revoked and should pay the penalty. But if Pair 7 is given its top score when it had reached an inferior contract, all the other pairs playing in the game will suffer. A top score on this board may give Pair 7 something like 130 match-points for the evening and permit it to beat some other pair which amassed 129 match-points without benefit of law.

In such a case, the tournament director would be justified in awarding some 'neutral' score to pair 7—say 2 match-points above average. Pair 3 would still get its bottom, of course. Thus the offender would suffer, and the non-offender would be indemnified—but not at the expense of the field.

The Tournament Director's Powers

Experience has shown the urgency, even in the smallest duplicate game, of appointing a non-playing referee and investing him with autocratic powers. So the code says: 'A Tournament Director shall be appointed to conduct and supervise the game or tournament. . . . All other persons concerned in the conduct, supervision, and scoring of a game or tournament shall act under the direction and authority of the Tournament Director. . . . It is the duty of the Tournament Director, in person or through his agents, to arrange and number tables; to assign positions . . . to direct the progression of players and movements of trays . . . to score the game . . . to make all announcements necessary for the information and guidance of the players . . . to maintain order and discipline . . . to make such rectifications of error of procedure as are necessary for the continuance of play . . . to administer and interpret the laws of duplicate bridge and tournament procedure.' To prevent abuse of this power, players have right of appeal from the decisions of the tournament director to a club or tournament committee and ultimately to the National Laws Commission.

To protect the interests of the field, the introduction to the duplicate code says: 'In a dispute at rubber bridge there are only two parties concerned--the two partnerships at the table. An arbiter need but weigh the actions and interests of the two sides. In most cases at duplicate three parties are concerned--the two partnerships at a table and the rest of the contestants in the game. It cannot be too much emphasized that the Tournament Director is therefore bound to act in a dual capacity: as the first court of jurisdiction, and as *the representative of the third party*.' Further it is said 'if an irregularity in fact causes no material damage, the Tournament Director should seek a course under law that will avoid giving any pair an undue advantage as against the field'.



LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

LAWS OF PROGRESSIVE BRIDGE

LAWS OF PIVOT BRIDGE

As agreed upon and promulgated by the Portland Club, the European Bridge League, the National Laws Commission of America.

The rules are published separately in book form by Thomas de la Rue & Co., Ltd., London, for the Portland Club

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LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

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THE SCOPE OF THE LAWS

The Laws are designed to define correct procedure and to provide an adequate remedy in all cases where a player accidentally, carelessly or inadvertently disturbs the proper course of the game, or gains an unintentional but nevertheless unfair advantage. An offending player should be ready to pay graciously any penalty or adjusted score awarded by the Tournament Director

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The Laws are not designed to prevent dishonourable practices. In the absence of penalty, moral obligations are strongest.

The object of the Proprieties is twofold: to familiarize players with the customs and etiquette of the game, generally accepted over a long period of years; and to enlighten those who might otherwise fail to appreciate when or how they are improperly conveying information to their partners—often a far more reprehensible offence than a violation of a law.

When these principles are appreciated, arguments are avoided and the pleasure which the game offers is materially enhanced.

Part I

DEFINITIONS

ADJUSTED SCORE—An arbitrary score assigned by the Tournament Director.

AVERAGE—One-half the maximum match-point score available to a contestant.

BID—An offer to contract to win at least a specified number of odd tricks in a specified denomination.

BOARD—A duplicate board, see section 2; or the four hands as originally dealt and placed in a duplicate board for play during that session.

CALL—A comprehensive term applicable to a bid, a double, a redouble or a pass.

CONTESTANT—In an individual event, a player; in a pair event, a pair; in a team event, a team.

CONTRACT—See section 22.

CONTRACTOR—Declarer or dummy.

DECLARER—The player who for his side first bid the denomination named in the contract.

DEFENDER—An opponent of declarer.

DENOMINATION—The suit or no-trump named in a bid.

DIRECTOR—The Tournament Director.

DOUBLE—See sections 24 and 25.

DUMMY—Declarer's partner.

EVENT—A contest of one or more sessions played until a winner is determined.

FOLLOW SUIT—To play a card of the suit led.

GAME—A trick score of 100 points or more made on one board.

HAND—The thirteen cards allotted to one player, or any part thereof remaining unplayed.

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HONOUR—Any Ace, King, Queen, Jack or ten.

INSUFFICIENT BID—See section 23.

MATCH-POINT—A credit awarded to a contestant whose score on a given board is better than that of another contestant.

ODD TRICK—A trick won by declarer in excess of six.

OPPONENT—A player of the other side.

OVERTRICK—A trick won by declarer in excess of his contract.

PAIR—Two persons playing together throughout an event.

PARTNER—The player with whom one plays a given board as a **SIDE** against two other players. He occupies the opposite seat at the table.

PASS—A call of 'no bid' signifying that a player does not, on that occasion, elect to bid, double or redouble.

PENALTY CARD—See sections 67, 68 and 69.

PLAY—To contribute a card to a trick, including the first card which is the **LEAD**.

REDOUBLE—See sections 24 and 25.

REVOKE—To play a card of another suit when able to follow suit.

ROTATION—The order in which the turn to call or play passes from player to player, which is clockwise.

ROUND—Each part of a session played without movement of players.

SECTION—A group of contestants playing independently of any other group so far as movement of boards and players is concerned.

SESSION—A sitting at which a group of boards is scheduled to be played without intermission except for movement of boards and players.

SLAMS—Grand Slam—the winning of thirteen tricks by one side; Little Slam—the winning of twelve tricks by one side.

SUFFICIENT BID—See section 23.

TEAM—Two pairs playing in different directions at different tables, but as a unit. Applicable regulations may permit teams of more than four members.

AGGREGATE—Points scored in accordance with the Scoring Table, section 94.

TRICK—See section 47.

TRUMP—Each card of the suit, if any, named in the contract.

UNDERTRICK—A trick by which declarer falls short of his contract.

VULNERABLE—Subject to certain higher premiums and penalties.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

Part II

PRELIMINARIES

The Pack—Rank of Cards and Suits

1. Duplicate Contract Bridge is played with a pack of 52 cards, comprising 13 cards in each of 4 suits. The suits rank downward in the order—Spades (♠), Hearts (♥), Diamonds (♦), Clubs (♣). The cards of each suit rank downward in the order—Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

The Duplicate Boards

2. A duplicate board containing a pack is provided for each deal to be played during a session. Each board is numbered and has four pockets to hold the four hands, designated North, South, East and West respectively. An arrow indicates the North hand. The dealer and vulnerability are designated as follows:†

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------|
| North Dealer | Boards | 1 5 9 13 |
| East Dealer | Boards | 2 6 10 14 |
| South Dealer | Boards | 3 7 11 15 |
| West Dealer | Boards | 4 8 12 16 |
| Neither Side Vulnerable | Boards | 1 8 11 14 |
| North-South Vulnerable | Boards | 2 5 12 15 |
| East-West Vulnerable | Boards | 3 6 9 16 |
| Both Sides Vulnerable | Boards | 4 7 10 13 |

The same sequence is repeated for Boards 17-32, and for each subsequent group of 16 boards.

Assignment of Tables and Seats

3. Four players play at each table. Each table should be numbered. Before a session begins, the Director designates the North seat at all tables, assigns each player to a seat and instructs him where and when to move for subsequent rounds. Play of a session begins upon a signal by the Director.

† This is the system adopted in America. Other countries may continue to use boards designated differently and with different sequences.

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The Shuffle and Deal

4. Before play begins, each pack is shuffled and dealt face downwards by the players at each table, one card at a time in rotation, into four hands of thirteen cards each. Each hand is then placed face downward in one of the four pockets of the board. A member of each side must be present during the shuffle and deal unless the Director rules otherwise.

5. There must be a new shuffle and a redeal if it is ascertained during the deal that the cards have been incorrectly dealt or that a player has seen the face of a card. The Director may also require a redeal for any reason he deems sufficient.

6. Boards may be dealt or prearranged in advance only under the direction of the Tournament Committee or of a committee appointed by the Director.

Placing of Boards— Removal of Hands Player Exposing Card Before the Auction Begins

7. When a board is about to be played, it is placed in the centre of the table, with the arrow pointing to the direction designated as North. After the four players are seated, each player takes the hand from the pocket corresponding to his own compass position. If a player, in so doing and before looking at his hand, exposes a card, it is treated as improper information under section 20.

8. The board is left in the centre of the table until the hands have been restored to their respective pockets after the completion of play. Thereafter no hand shall be removed from the board unless a member of each side, or the Director, is present.¹

Duty to Count Cards

9. Upon withdrawing his cards from the board, and before looking at the face of any of them, each player should count his cards to ascertain that he has exactly thirteen. A player should count his cards again after completion of play, just before returning them to the board.

¹ In play on small tables it may be removed after the bidding is completed and returned on completion of play.

Part III

GENERAL LAWS COVERING IRREGULARITIES

Drawing Attention to an Irregularity

10. The Director must be summoned as soon as attention is drawn to an irregularity. Any player (except a dummy who has forfeited his rights) may draw attention to it. To receive redress for an opponent's irregularity, a player should summon the Director as soon as he becomes aware of it. The fact that the offending side draws attention to its own irregularity does not in any way affect the rights of the opponents.

Enforcement of a Penalty

11. The Director assesses all penalties, citing and explaining any option.

12. When an option in penalties is provided either opponent individually (but not dummy) may make the selection. If the opponents consult as to the selection, or if either opponent indicates that the penalty should be waived, the Director may void the right to penalize.

Assignment of an Adjusted Score

13. Players do not have the right to assess or waive penalties on their own initiative; and no claim, payment or waiver of penalty by any player is valid until ratified by the Director.

14. The Director may assign an adjusted score (or scores) either on his own initiative or on the application of any player, but only when these laws empower him to do so or when in the Director's opinion:

(a) These laws provide no penalty which wilfully indemnify a non-offending contestant for an opponent's violation of procedure or ethics or of a Propriety; or

(b) No rectification can be made that will permit normal play of the board; or

(c) An incorrect penalty has been paid.

15. The Director may not assign an adjusted score on the ground that the penalty provided in these laws is either unduly severe on the offending side or unduly advantageous to the non-offending side.

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16. An adjusted score may be assigned by altering the total-point score on the board, or by the assignment of zero or more match-points. The number of points assigned to the non-offending side should not exceed the number required to offset the irregularity. The number of points assigned to the offending side may be reduced by penalty points. Penalty points and indemnity points need not balance.

Wrong Number of Cards

17. If the Director decides that one or more pockets of the board contained an incorrect number of cards, he should correct it according to the hand records (if any are kept), or by consulting players who have previously played the board, or, if it was incorrectly dealt, by requiring a redeal. He should then require that the board be played and scored normally, unless a player has seen another player's card and the Director deems the information gained thereby of sufficient importance to interfere with normal play, in which case he should award an adjusted score, and may penalize an offender.

18. A missing card, when found, is deemed to belong to the deficient hand. It may become a penalty card, and its owner is answerable for a revoke due to failure to play it. If the Director decides that each pocket of the board contained the correct number of cards, the defective trick law may apply.

Playing a Wrong Board

19. If players play a board not designated for them to play in the current round, the Director may require them to play the correct board against each other later, but:

(a) If none of them has previously played the board, he should allow the score to stand.

(b) If any of them has previously played the board, he should assign an adjusted score; but if play of the board has been completed before the matter is brought to his attention, he should not reduce the actual score of a non-offending side.

Improper Information

20. If a player receives improper information¹ about a board he is playing or has yet to play, the Director should be notified

¹ Examples of improper information: information received by looking at the wrong hand, by overhearing calls or remarks or seeing cards at another table, by partner's improper remark or improper gesture, by seeing a card belonging to another player at one's own table before the auction begins.

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forthwith, preferably by the recipient of the information. The Director shall require that the board be played and scored normally, unless he considers the information gained of sufficient importance to interfere with normal play, in which case he may assign an adjusted score.

Part IV

THE AUCTION

The Laws of the Auction are identical in Duplicate and Rubber Bridge except for the italicized parts of sections 21 and 22 and the addition of section 43.

Duration of Auction

21. *The auction begins for each player when he looks at his hand after removing it from the board. The player designated by the board as dealer makes the first call, and thereafter each player calls in rotation. After the first call has been made, the auction continues until three players have passed in rotation. This closes the auction.*

Procedure After the Auction is Closed

22. After the auction is closed: If any player has bid, the last bid becomes the contract and the play begins; if no player has bid, *the hands are returned to the board without play. The fact that no player bids is not cause for a redeal.*

Bids

23. Each bid must name a number of odd tricks, from one to seven, and a denomination, and must supersede any previous bid by naming either a greater number of odd tricks or the same number in a higher denomination. A bid that supersedes the previous bid is sufficient; one that does not is insufficient. The denominations rank downward in order: No-Trump, Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs.

Doubles and Redoubles

24. A player may double only if the last preceding bid was made by an opponent and no call other than a pass has intervened. A player may redouble only if the last preceding call other than a pass was a double by an opponent.

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25. All doubles and redoubles are nullified by a proper subsequent bid. If there is no subsequent bid, the scoring value of the contract is increased as provided in section 94.

Card Exposed During the Auction

26. If during the auction a player faces a card on the table, or sees the face of a card belonging to his partner:

(a) If an Ace, King, Queen or Jack, or a lower card prematurely led, or more than one card;¹ (penalty) the owner's partner must pass when next it is his turn to call. Every such card must be left face up on the table until the auction closes; and if its owner is then a defender, it becomes a penalty card.

(b) If a single card, lower than a Jack and not prematurely led, there is no penalty.

IMPROPER CALLS²

Improper Call Prematurely Overcalled in Rotation

27. If a player calls before the penalty for an improper call by his right-hand opponent has been enforced, the auction proceeds as though it had been a proper call; except that if the improper call was a bid of more than seven, or a double or redouble made when only a pass or bid could be a proper call, the auction proceeds as though the improper call had been a pass.

Changing a Call

28. If a player changes a call in any way and does so practically in the same breath, his last call stands. There is no penalty unless he has changed to an improper call, in which case the appropriate 'improper calls' section applies.

29. If a player changes a call in any way, and does not do so practically in the same breath, the change of call is void, and:

(a) If the first call was improper, the appropriate 'improper calls' section applies.

(b) If the first call was a proper call, either the offender must

¹ If two (or more) cards are faced or seen at different times, clause (a) applies to both of them even though one has been picked up as provided in clause (b).

² All possible improper calls are listed under this heading. Calls not recognized by nor dealt with in these laws are merely improper remarks. The auction proceeds as if an improper remark had not been made, unless the remark is sufficiently informative to warrant invoking section 20.

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allow his first call to stand, in which case (penalty) his partner must pass when next it is his turn to call; or the offender must substitute any other proper call, in which case (penalty) his partner must pass whenever it is his turn to call.

Insufficient Bid

30. If a player makes an insufficient bid, he must substitute either a sufficient bid or a pass.¹ If he substitutes:

(a) The lowest sufficient bid in the same denomination, there is no penalty.

(b) Any other bid (penalty), the offender's partner must pass whenever it is his turn to call.

(c) A pass (penalty), the offender's partner must pass whenever it is his turn to call; and if the offending side become the defenders, declarer may require or forbid the opening lead of a specified suit.

Call out of Rotation

31. A call out of rotation is void. The auction reverts to the player whose turn it is to call; and:

(a) If a player has passed out of rotation before any player has bid, or when it was the turn of the opponent on his right to call (penalty), the offender must pass when next it is his turn to call.²

(b) If a player has made any call out of rotation other than a pass listed in (a) (penalty), the offender's partner must pass whenever it is his turn to call.³

32. A call is not out of rotation when made without waiting for the right-hand opponent to pass, if he is required to pass because of a law infringement.

33. If a player, whose turn it was to call, calls before attention has been drawn to a call out of rotation by his left-hand opponent, the auction proceeds as though that opponent had not called.

¹ A player is entitled to select his substituted call after the applicable penalties have been stated. Any call he may have substituted previously is void, unless his left-hand opponent has overcalled it, in which case section 27 applies.

² Example: North (dealer) 1 heart, South no bid. The pass is void, and the auction reverts to East. After East has called, South must pass. Thereafter North and South may in rotation make any proper call.

³ Example: North (dealer) 1 heart, South 1 spade. The 1-spade bid is void, and the auction reverts to East. After East has called, South may make any proper call. Thereafter, North must pass whenever it is his turn to call, but South may make any proper call whenever it is his turn to call.

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Simultaneous Calls

34. A call made simultaneously with another player's proper call is deemed to be a subsequent call.

Naming Bid Incorrectly in Doubling¹

35. If a player in doubling or redoubling names an incorrect number of tricks or a wrong denomination, he is deemed to have doubled or redoubled the bid as made.

Doubling When the only Proper Call is a Pass or Bid

36. If a player doubles or redoubles a bid which his side has already doubled or redoubled, (penalty) he must substitute any proper call, and his partner must pass whenever it is his turn to call. In addition, if the offender elects to pass, either opponent may cancel all previous doubles and redoubles.

37. If a player doubles his partner's bid, redoubles an undoubled bid, or doubles or redoubles when there has been no bid, (penalty) the offender must substitute any proper call, and his partner must pass whenever it is his turn to call.

Bid, Double or Redouble When Required to Pass—Bid of More Than Seven

38. If a player bids more than seven, or bids, doubles or redoubles when required by law to pass; the offender is deemed to have passed, and (penalty) the offending side must pass whenever it is its turn to call, and if the offender becomes a defender, declarer may require or forbid the opening lead of a specified suit.

Doubly Improper Call

39. If a player makes a call subject to penalty under two or more 'improper calls' sections, either section may be applied but not both.

Call After the Auction is Closed

40. A call made after the auction is closed is cancelled. If it is a pass by a defender, or any call by a contractor, there is no penalty. If it is a bid, double or redouble by a defender, (penalty) declarer may require or forbid the other defender to lead a specified suit when first it is the latter's turn to lead.

¹ It is improper to state the number of tricks or the denomination in doubling.

REVIEWING THE AUCTION

41. A player who does not hear a call distinctly may forthwith require it to be repeated. There is no redress for a call based on a misunderstanding or on misinformation.

42. A player is entitled to have previous calls restated either when it is his turn to call, or after the auction closes but before the opening lead has been duly made. His request should be responded to only by an opponent. Dummy, or a player required by law to pass, should not ask to have calls restated, but may review the auction at an opponent's request and should correct errors in restatement.

After the opening lead, calls may not be restated, but declarer or a defender is entitled to be informed what the contract is and whether, but not by whom, it was doubled or redoubled.

PARTNERSHIP UNDERSTANDINGS

43. A player may make any call or play (including an intentionally misleading call such as a 'psychic bid', or a call or play that departs from commonly accepted or previously announced conventional practice) without prior announcement, provided it is not based on a partnership understanding. But:

(a) A player may not make a call or play based on a partnership understanding unless the opposing pair may reasonably be expected to understand its meaning, or unless his side has announced its use of such call or play before either member has looked at his hand. Detailed explanation may be deferred until the call or play is actually made.

(b) If the Director decides that a side has been damaged through its opponents' failure to explain the meaning of a call or play before or at the time of its use, he may award an adjusted score.

(c) If a player is in doubt as to the significance of an opponent's call, or if declarer is in doubt as to the significance of a defender's play, he should forthwith summon the Director. If, after consulting the opponents (privately, if necessary), the Director decides that the call or play has any special or unusual meaning, he should require the player who made the call or play to leave the table and his partner to explain its meaning.

(d) The Director, Sponsoring Organization or Tournament Committee may forbid the use of such conventions as might place other contestants at a disadvantage, or the explanation of which might cause undue delay.

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Part V

THE PLAY

The Laws of the Play are identical in Duplicate and Rubber Bridge except for the italicized parts of the text in the Play Laws of this code.

Commencement of Play

44. After the auction closes, the defender on declarer's left makes the opening lead. After the opening lead dummy spreads his hand in front of him on the table, face upward and grouped in suits with the trumps on his right. Declarer plays both of the contractor's hands.

Dummy's Rights

Dummy Improperly Playing or Indicating Card

45. Dummy should refrain from all active comment and from taking any active part in the play; except that.

(a) He may question players regarding revokes as provided in section 71; draw attention to an irregularity, or try to prevent one that is apparently about to be committed;¹ notify the Director of any matter that may affect the legal rights of his side; keep count of the tricks won and lost by each side, and draw attention to the fact that another player's card played to the preceding trick has been pointed in the wrong direction.

(b) He may play the cards of the dummy hand as declarer's agent and as directed by him. If dummy places in the played position a card that declarer did not name, the card must be withdrawn if attention is drawn to it before a card has been led to the next trick, and a defender may withdraw a card played after the error but before attention was drawn to it. If dummy prematurely touches or indicates a card, and the Director decides that such act was of assistance to declarer, a penalty, the Director may require or forbid declarer to play that card or its equivalent.

Forfeiture of Dummy's Rights

46. Dummy should not exchange hands with declarer, lean over to see a defender's cards, leave his seat to watch declarer

¹ Example: He may warn declarer against leading from the wrong hand, but only when it is apparent that declarer is about to do so.

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play, or on his own initiative see the face of a card in any other player's hand. If, as a result of any such act, dummy sees the face of a card in any other player's hand; or if dummy looks at a score pertaining to the board in play; (penalty) he forfeits the rights granted by section 45 (a) and the Director may require him to leave the table until the play of the board is completed. If, having forfeited his rights, dummy:

(a) Is the first to draw attention to a defender's irregularity, declarer may not enforce any penalty for the offence.

(b) Warns declarer not to lead from the wrong hand, (penalty) either defender may choose the hand from which declarer shall lead.

(c) Is the first to ask declarer if a play from his hand constitutes a revoke, and the revoke card is consequently withdrawn, (penalty) either defender may require declarer to substitute his highest or lowest correct card.

LEADS AND PLAYS

The Sequence and Procedure of Play

47. The leader to a trick may play any card in his hand. After a lead, each other hand in rotation plays a card, and the four cards so played constitute a trick.

48. In playing to a trick, each player must if possible follow suit. This obligation overrides all other requirements of the laws. If unable to follow suit, a player may play any card.

49. A trick containing a trump is won by the hand playing the highest trump. A trick that does not contain a trump is won by the hand playing the highest card of the suit led. The hand winning a trick leads to the next trick.

Played Card

50. A card in any hand is played when named as the one a player proposes to play; but a player may change his designation if he does so practically in the same breath, or if he designates a card which is not there.

51. A card in any unfaced hand is played when it touches the table face upwards after being detached from the remaining cards with apparent intent to play; a defender's card so detached is also played as soon as his partner sees its face.

52. Unless touched for a purpose other than play either manifest or mentioned, a card in dummy is played when touched by its owner.

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Taking Back Played Card

53. A played card may not be withdrawn except:

- (a) To comply with a penalty.
- (b) To correct a revoke.
- (c) To correct the error of playing more than one card to a trick.
- (d) To substitute another card after an opponent has corrected a revoke, a failure to comply with a lead or play penalty, or dummy's placing the wrong card in the played position.

Premature Lead or Play by a Defender

54. If a defender leads to the next trick before his partner has played to the current trick, or plays out of rotation before his partner has played, (penalty) declarer may require the offender's partner to play:

- (a) His highest card of the suit led; or
- (b) His lowest card of the suit led; or
- (c) A card of another specified suit.

If declarer has played from both contractors' hands, a defender is not subject to penalty for playing before his partner.

Lead out of Turn

55. A lead out of turn may be treated as a correct lead. It must be so treated if the non-offending side plays a card before attention is drawn to the irregularity.¹

56. If either defender requires declarer to retract his lead out of turn, the card wrongly led is replaced without penalty, and if declarer has led from the wrong hand, he must lead from the correct hand and (penalty), if he can, a card of the same suit. A defender's drawing attention to declarer's lead out of turn is equivalent to requiring its retraction.

57. If declarer requires a defender to retract his lead out of turn:

- (a) If it was a contractor's turn to lead, declarer leads from the correct hand and the card led out of turn becomes a penalty card.

¹ After an opening lead by the wrong defender: (a) declarer should not expose his hand; if he does so inadvertently section 65 applies; (b) dummy should not face his hand until the other defender has led; but he should face it before declarer plays from his own hand if declarer treats the lead out of turn as a correct lead.

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(b) If it was the other defender's turn to lead, (penalty) declarer may forbid the lead of that suit, in which case the card wrongly led is picked up; or may treat the card led out of turn as a penalty card, in which case any card may be led.

Simultaneous Leads or Plays

58. A lead or play made simultaneously with another player's proper lead or play is deemed to be subsequent to it. If a defender leads or plays two or more cards simultaneously, he may play either card, and the other card becomes a penalty card.

Inability to Lead or Play as Required

59. If a player is unable to lead or play as required to comply with a penalty, either because he has no card of the required suit or because of his obligation to follow suit, he may play any correct card. The penalty is satisfied, except in the case of a penalty card, which must be played at the first legal opportunity.

Playing Before Penalty has been Enforced

60. If declarer plays from either hand before enforcing a lead or play penalty, he is deemed to waive the penalty.

61. If a defender plays to a contractor's lead out of turn after declarer has been required to retract it, the defender's card becomes a penalty card.

62. A play by a member of the offending side, before a penalty has been enforced, does not affect the right of the non-offending side to enforce a penalty.

EXPOSED CARDS

Declarer Exposing Cards

63. Declarer is never subject to penalty for exposure of a card, and no card of declarer's ever becomes a penalty card.

64. If declarer plays more than one card he must designate which is his play, and must restore any other card to his hand.

65. If declarer exposes his hand after an opening lead by the wrong defender, and before dummy has spread any part of his hand, dummy becomes declarer.

66. If declarer intentionally exposes his hand otherwise than as provided in the preceding section, it is treated as a claim or concession of tricks and section 88 applies.

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Defender Exposing Cards

67. If a defender faces a card on the table, or sees the face of a card belonging to his partner before he is entitled to see it in the normal course of play or penalty enforcement; any such card becomes a penalty card, except as otherwise provided in these laws.¹

Disposition of a Penalty Card

68. A penalty card must be left face upward on the table until played. A defender should not pick up a penalty card and restore it to his hand; but if he does so, and if declarer plays from his own hand or dummy before requiring that the card be faced on the table again, such card ceases to be a penalty card.

69. A penalty card must be played at the first opportunity, whether in leading, following suit, discarding or trumping. The play of a penalty card is always subject to the obligation to follow suit, or to comply with a lead or play penalty. If a defender can play two or more penalty cards, declarer may designate which one is to be played.

Defender Improperly Exposing his Hand

70. If a defender improperly exposes his remaining card or cards, declarer may treat the remaining cards of either defender as penalty cards. The hand of the other defender, if exposed, may be picked up.

THE REVOKE

Inquiries Regarding a Revoke

71. Any player, including dummy, may ask a player who has failed to follow suit whether he has a card of the suit led, and may demand that an opponent correct his revoke.

Correcting a Revoke

72. A player must correct his revoke:

(a) Made in any of the first eleven tricks, if aware of it before it becomes established.

¹ Exceptions to section 67. A card led out of turn may be treated as a correct lead, section 55, or may be picked up, section 57. *a*. An exposed card may not be treated as a penalty card if dummy improperly, section 46. *b*, draws attention to it, or to the irregularity that caused its exposure.

² The penalty provisions of the revoke law are subject to section 46 if dummy has forfeited his rights. A claim of revoke does not warrant inspection of turned tricks except as permitted in sections 78 and 79.

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(b) Made in the twelfth trick, if aware of it *before all four hands have been returned to the board*. There is no penalty for a revoke made in the twelfth trick and it never becomes established.

73. To correct a revoke, the offender withdraws the revoke card and follows suit with any card. A revoke card from a defender's unfaced hand becomes a penalty card; any other revoke card may be replaced without penalty. The non-offending side may withdraw any card it played after the revoke but before attention was drawn to it.

Acts that Establish a Revoke

74. A revoke in any of the first eleven tricks becomes established when the offender or his partner leads or plays to a subsequent trick or signifies his intention of doing so by naming a card, by claiming or conceding a trick, or by exposing a hand.

Procedure When a Revoke is Established

75. When a revoke is established, the revoke trick stands as played. It counts in transferring tricks as a trick won 'after the revoke'.

76. If a revoke becomes established, (penalty) after play ceases two tricks are transferred to the non-offending side if the revoking side has won two or more tricks after the revoke. One trick only is transferred if the revoking side wins but one trick after the revoke. There is no penalty for an established revoke:

- (a) If the revoking side wins no trick after the revoke.
- (b) If it is a subsequent revoke in the same suit by the same player.
- (c) If attention is first drawn to it after *the round has ended and the board has been moved*.
- (d) If it is made in failing to play any card faced on the table, including a card from dummy's hand or a penalty card.

TRICKS

Arranging Tricks

77. *After a trick is completed, each player retains possession of his card and places it face downward on the table directly in front of him. Each player (including dummy) should keep track of which side wins each trick by pointing his card, as he turns it down, lengthwise towards the side that won the trick. At the completion of play each player's thirteen cards should have been arranged in an overlapping row and in the order played, the direction of each card indicating which side won the trick.*

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Inspecting Tricks

78. Declarer or either defender may, until his side has led or played to the next trick, inspect the cards played to a trick. Except as above provided, or to account for a surplus or missing card, turned cards may be inspected before play ceases only with the other side's consent or at the discretion of the Director.

79. After play ceases, the tricks and unplayed cards may be inspected to settle a claim.

Defective Trick

80. If a hand has played too many cards to a trick, or has omitted to play to it, and if attention is drawn to the irregularity before a player of each side has played to the next trick, the error must be rectified. A card withdrawn from a defective trick, if played from a defender's unfaced hand, becomes a penalty card.

81. If attention is drawn to a defective trick after a player of each side has played to the next trick, the defective trick stands as played, and:

(a) A hand with too few cards plays the hand out with fewer cards than the other hands, does not play to the final trick (or tricks), and if it wins a trick with its last card the lead passes in rotation.

(b) A hand with too many cards forthwith faces and adds to the defective trick (but without changing its ownership) a card it could properly have played to it.

Trick Appropriated in Error

82. Any player, subject in the case of dummy to section 45, may demand that a card incorrectly pointed be turned in the proper direction. Irrespective of how cards are pointed, each trick must be credited to the side that played the winning card. In case of disagreement, play should cease until the ownership of doubtful tricks is established, and if necessary the Director should be summoned.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH A PENALTY

83. If a player is able to lead or play a penalty card, or a card or suit specified by an opponent in conformity with an assessed penalty, but instead plays an incorrect card:

(a) The offender must correct his error if aware of it before he or his partner plays another card. If the incorrect card was played from a defender's unfaced hand, it becomes a penalty

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card. A card played from the hand on the offender's left may be withdrawn if it was played after the error and before attention was drawn to it.

(b) After the offender or his partner has played another card, the incorrect card may not be withdrawn, *unless the Director rules that it shall be; or the Director may award an adjusted score.*

CLAIMS AND CONCESSIONS

Concession of Trick Which Cannot be Lost

84. The concession of a trick which cannot be lost by any play of the cards is void, *provided the error is brought to an opponent's attention before the round has ended and the board has been moved.*

Concession of Trick Which Has Been Won

85. If a player concedes a trick he has in fact won (as by claiming nine tricks when his side has won ten, or conceding defeat of a contract his side has fulfilled), the concession is void, *provided the error is brought to the Director's attention within 30 minutes after the end of the session.*

Defender Claiming or Conceding Tricks

86. A defender may show any or all of his remaining cards to declarer for the purpose of establishing a claim or concession. If a defender makes a claim or concession in any other manner, he may be liable to penalty under section 20.

87. A concession of tricks by a defender is not valid unless his partner accedes. This provision does not preclude the enforcement of a penalty for a defender's irregularity.

Declarer Claiming or Conceding Tricks

88. If declarer intentionally exposes his hand, specifically claims or concedes one or more of the remaining tricks, or suggests that play may be curtailed, it is deemed to be a claim by declarer; and:

(a) Play should cease; and declarer should place and leave his hand face upwards on the table and forthwith make an adequate statement of his intended line of play.

(b) At any time after declarer's claim a defender may face his hand and may suggest a play to his partner. Declarer may not enforce any penalty for an irregularity committed by a defender whose hand is so faced.

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Determination of Disputed Claims

89. *If either opponent questions a claim or concession of any trick, the Director should be summoned forthwith and no action of any kind should be taken pending his arrival. The Director determines the result on the board, awarding any doubtful trick to the claimant's opponents. Before determining said result, he may:*

(a) *Require the claimant to state the order in which he proposes to play his remaining cards, and forbid any departure from any statement made by the claimant.*

(b) *Require or forbid play to continue.*

PROPRIETIES OF THE AUCTION AND PLAY

The Proprieties of Duplicate and Rubber Bridge are nearly identical, except for the omission of the Rubber Bridge propriety dealing with conventions, which are covered by section 43 of this code.

(1) It is reprehensible to profit by information gained as a result of an irregularity committed by one's own side for which no penalty, or a penalty incommensurate with the information gained, is prescribed.

(2) It is improper to infringe a law deliberately, as by making an insufficient bid, whether or not a penalty is prescribed.

(3) A player should refrain from:

(a) Varying the formulae used in calling;¹

(b) Calling with special emphasis, inflection, or intonation;

(c) Passing or doubling with exceptional haste or reluctance;

(d) Making a call with undue delay which may result in conveying improper information to partner;

(e) Indicating in any way approval or disapproval of partner's call or play;

(f) Giving by word, manner or gesture an indication of the nature of the hand held;

(g) Making a remark or gesture or asking a question from which an inference may be drawn;

(h) Giving unauthorized information as to an incident of the auction or play;

¹ The recommended calling formulae in Great Britain are: 'No bid' avoid pass), 'one Heart', 'one no-trump', 'double'.

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- (i) Volunteering information which should be given only in response to a question;
- (j) Requesting, except for his own benefit, a review of calls or of cards played to a trick;
- (k) An unnecessary hesitation, remark or mannerism which may deceive the opponents;
- (l) Calling attention to the number of tricks needed to complete or defeat the contract or to the fact that it has already been fulfilled or defeated;
- (m) Playing a card with special emphasis;
- (n) Playing with undue delay when the play does not need consideration;
- (o) Detaching a card from his hand before it is his turn to lead or play;
- (p) Watching the place in a player's hand from which he draws a card, and drawing any inference therefrom;
- (q) Making gratuitous comments during the play as to the auction, the adequacy of the contract or the nature of the hand.
- (4) It is improper to attempt to conceal a revoke by revoking again, or to conceal a revoke card if a hand is not played out, but there is no obligation to call attention to an established revoke or other irregularity committed by self or partner.
- (5) It is improper to play out of turn, carelessly or otherwise.
- (6) While it is reprehensible to allow partner's hesitation, remark or manner to influence a call, lead or play, it is proper to draw inferences from an opponent's gratuitous hesitation, remark or manner, but such inferences are drawn at one's own risk.
- (7) It is proper to warn partner against infringing a law of the game (e.g., against revoking, or against calling, leading or playing out of turn).
- (8) All four players are responsible to see that each hand plays a card, and but one, to each trick, and should forthwith correct such an irregularity.
- (9) Declarer should play out all hands in which there is any doubt as to the eventual outcome.
- (10) A player should maintain at all times a courteous manner towards his partner and opponents, and should refrain from words or actions which would cause them annoyance or embarrassment or interfere with the enjoyment of the game.
- (11) Bystanders should refrain from making gratuitous remarks. They should not call attention to any irregularity or mistake, or speak on any question of fact or law except when requested to give an opinion.

Part VI

THE SCORE

Duplicate and Rubber-Bridge scoring are the same, except that in Duplicate Bridge: Trick-points scored in one hand do not count towards making game in a subsequent hand; premium points are scored for making a part-score or game, not for winning a rubber; honours are not scored in match-point play.

Official Scorer

90. An Official Scorer, satisfactory to the Director, must be appointed unless the Director serves also as Official Scorer. The Official Scorer should be provided with such assistants as he may need.

Players Responsible for Scoring

91. When play ceases on each board, the North player must calculate the points scored by each side in accordance with the Scoring Table and must record such scores on the scoring form provided for the purpose.

92. The East player must ascertain that the score of each board is correctly recorded as required by the succeeding section and must then initial it in the space provided on the scoring form for that purpose.

Recording the Score

93. In recording the score of each board, the North player must supply the following items:

(a) The number of the board played, and the position and identifying number of each pair (or, in an Individual contest, of each player);

(b) The contract; or, if the board was passed out, an indication to that effect;

(c) If the contract was doubled or redoubled, an indication to that effect;

(d) Declarer (North, South, East or West);

(e) The net total number of points won by either side on that board;

and any other items called for by the scoring form.

94. DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE SCORING TABLE

| TRICK POINTS FOR CONTRACTOR | <i>Odd Tricks Bid and Won in</i> | Undoubled | Doubled |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| | Clubs or Diamonds, each | 20 | 40 |
| | Hearts or Spades, each | 30 | 60 |
| | No-Trump } first | 40 | 80 |
| | } each subsequent | 30 | 60 |

Redoubling doubles the doubled points for Odd Tricks.
Vulnerability does not affect points for Odd Tricks.
100 Trick Points constitute a game.

| PREMIUM POINTS FOR DEFENDERS CONTRACTORS | <i>Overticks</i> | Not | |
|---|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Vulnerable Trick Value | Vulnerable Trick Value |
| | Undoubled, each | | |
| | Doubled, each | 100 | 200 |
| | <i>Making Doubled or Redoubled Contract</i> } | 50 | 50 |
| | <i>Undertricks</i> | | |
| | Undoubled, each | 50 | 100 |
| | Doubled } first | 100 | 200 |
| | } each subsequent | 200 | 300 |

Redoubling doubles the doubled points for Overticks and Undertricks, but does not affect the points for making Doubled Contracts.

| PREMIUM POINTS FOR CONTRACTORS HOLDERS | <i>Honours in One Hand</i> { | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | |
| | 4 Trump Honours | | 100 |
| | 5 Trump Honours or 4 Aces at No-Trump | | 150 |
| | <i>Slams Bid and Won</i> } | Little, not vulnerable | 500, vulnerable 750 |
| | | Grand, not vulnerable | 1000, vulnerable 1500 |
| | <i>Making any Part Score</i> | | 50 |
| | <i>Making Game, not vulnerable</i> | 300, vulnerable | 500 |

Doubling and Redoubling do not affect Honour, Slam, Part Score or Game points.
Vulnerability does not affect points for Honours or Part Score.
Points for Honours do not count in match-point scoring.

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Duties of Official Scorer—Official Score

95. The Official Scorer's duties include: Preparing an Official Score, which shall set forth each contestant's score for each board and his score and rank for the session and for the event; posting the Official Score, as promptly and as conspicuously as possible, for the inspection of the players; when time permits, examining the scores recorded by the players, correcting scores that are patently incorrect, and returning for verification or correction scores that may be incorrect.

Time Limits for Correction of Scoring Errors

96. A score may not be changed because of a revoke, section 72 (b) or 76 (c), or because of concession of a trick actually won, section 85, unless it is claimed within the time limits prescribed by the applicable section.

97. To change a score because a trick has been unjustifiably claimed or conceded under section 84, 87 or 89, the trick must be reclaimed from an opponent, and the Director summoned if necessary before the round has ended and the board has been moved.

98. To change a score because an opponent has received improper information, section 20, or has failed to explain a call or play, section 43 (b), a contestant must notify the Director within 30 minutes after the end of the session.

99. To correct an error in recording or totalling a score, or to change a score because the cards in a board became interchanged, a contestant must notify the Director within such time limit as may have been established for the correction of any such errors. It may be no less than 30 minutes nor more than 24 hours after the posting of the Official Score. If no time limit is stated on the Official Score, it shall be the scheduled starting time of the next session of play in the tournament. But no error may be corrected:

(a) After the start of the next session of an event, if its correction would result in the elimination of a pair already playing therein.

(b) Unless the Director's attention is drawn to it within one hour of posting the Official Score of the last session of the last event of a tournament.

Tabulating Match-Points in Pair or Individual Play¹

100. Scores are tabulated in such manner that all scores made on the same board in the same direction (North-South or East-

¹ This is the American system. The organizers of Tournaments in other continents may play their Tournaments under other methods of scoring.

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West) may be compared together. Considering only scores made by other pairs on the same board in the same direction, each score is awarded $\frac{1}{2}$ match-point for each score identical with it, and 1 match-point for each lower score. When an adjusted score is awarded, each other contestant playing the same board in the same direction is awarded $\frac{1}{2}$ match-point for his comparison with the adjusted score.

Tabulating Match-Points in Team Play¹

101. In match-point team play, scores are so tabulated as to permit ready comparison between the North-South and East-West scores of each team on each board. A team is awarded 1 match-point if the total of its North-South and East-West scores is positive; $\frac{1}{2}$ match-point if the total is exactly zero; and no match-point if the total is negative.

Determining Winners in Match-Point Events

102. The match-points awarded to each contestant are totalled and the contestant winning the greatest number of match-points is declared the winner. In case the conditions of the game require that the contestants be divided into sections or groups, announcement should be made in advance whether there will be one winner recognized for the entire field, or a separate winner for each section or group.

Determining Winners in Aggregate Events

103. In an aggregate event the winner is the contestant who has a better net score than any other contestant with whom he is competing.

Ties

104. In a match-point event tied contestants share honours equally; but the Tournament Committee may, at its discretion, instruct that any tie be broken for the purpose of awarding prizes. In a qualifying round, a tie for last qualifying position must be broken to determine which contestant qualifies.

Breaking Ties in Pair or Individual Events

105. Every board which each tied contestant played is counted in breaking a tie, irrespective of whether the tied contestants

¹ This is the American system. The organizers of Tournaments in other continents may play their Tournaments under other methods of scoring.

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played the same or different boards, or in the same or different sections. On boards played by two or more tied contestants, 1 point is awarded a tied contestant for each board on which his match-point score is higher than that of another tied contestant.¹ On boards played by but one tied contestant, 1 point is awarded him for each one of his match-point scores above average, $\frac{1}{2}$ point for average, 0 points for below average. The tied contestant so awarded the greatest number of points takes prior rank.

Breaking Ties in Match-Point Team Events

106. If the tied teams have met in direct competition: The one winning the greater number of match-points against the other takes prior rank. If the match-points between the tied teams are tied, the team winning the greater number of total points against the other takes prior rank. If the teams are tied in both match-points and total-points, or if they did not meet in direct competition, the team winning the greater number of net total points on all boards takes prior rank.

Breaking Ties in Aggregate Team Events

107. The team winning the greatest number of match-points on all boards played by both halves of both teams takes prior rank.

Part VII

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

108. Any organization may sponsor events or tournaments conducted under these Laws. The Sponsoring Organization has the following duties and powers:

- (a) To appoint the Tournament Director.
- (b) To make advance arrangements for the tournament, including playing quarters, accommodations and equipment.
- (c) To establish the date and time of each session.
- (d) To establish the conditions of entry, and to accept or reject the entry of any player without assigning cause.

¹ Example: If three contestants tied and played the same board, they would be awarded 2, 1 and 0 points, if each had a different match-point score on it; or 2, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ points, if one had the most match-points on it and the other two an equal but inferior number.

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(e) To publish or announce regulations supplementary to, but not in conflict with, these Laws.

(f) To appoint a Tournament Committee, to which it may delegate any of the above duties and powers; or, if it elects not to appoint a Tournament Committee, it may delegate any of its duties and powers to the Director appointed by it.

Part VIII

THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

Duties of the Director Summarized

109. The Tournament Director's duties include: listing the entries; selecting suitable movements and conditions of play, maintaining discipline and the orderly progress of the game; administering these laws: assessing penalties and assigning adjusted scores; adjusting disputes; collecting scores and tabulating results; keeping custody of scores and records. The Director should be provided with whatever assistants he needs to perform the duties assigned to him in this or other parts of the Laws.

Rectifying Errors of Procedure

110. It is the duty of the Director to rectify errors in correct procedure so as to continue the orderly progress of the game in a manner that is not contrary to these laws. To this end he may assign an adjusted score, require or postpone the play of a board, or reserve his decision on any point of fact or Law.

Calling Attention to Right to Appeal

111. If for any reason the Director thinks that a review of his decision might be in order (as when he assigns an adjusted score under section 115), he should advise a pair of its right to appeal: but his failure to do so does not entitle a pair to any special consideration.

Rulings on Agreed Facts

112. When the Director is called to rule upon a point of law, procedure, or ethics, in which the facts are agreed upon, he should proceed as follows:

(a) If no penalty is provided by law or dictated by his own

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judgment, he should so advise the players, and instruct them to proceed with the auction or play.

(b) If a case is clearly covered by a law which provides an adequate penalty for the irregularity, he should assess that penalty and see that it is paid.

(c) If the law provides an option among two or more penalties, he should explain them and see that a proper penalty is selected and paid.

(d) If a culpable offence has occurred for which no adequate penalty is assessed by law, he may award an adjusted score.

Rulings on Disputed Facts

113. When players do not agree on facts essential to the Director's ruling, the Director should determine as nearly as possible what his respective ruling would be under each statement of facts. If he becomes satisfied that he has ascertained the facts sufficiently to make a proper ruling, he should do so forthwith. Otherwise he should make a temporary adjustment based on the most probable statement of facts and should instruct the players to proceed on this basis, subject to their right to appeal for determination of the facts as provided in part IX.

Adjusted Score in Team Play

Substitution of a New Board

114. In team play, if time permits, the Director should substitute a new board instead of assigning an adjusted score:

(a) If neither team is at fault, or if both have contributed to the error; or

(b) If only one side is at fault and its team mates have previously played the board with a result favourable to them; or

(c) If the team mates of the players involved have not yet played the board.

The new board is played by both pairs of the teams concerned, to determine the score between them, but not necessarily by the rest of the field.

115. In team play, the Director should assign an adjusted score instead of substituting a new board when one pair is at fault and the other innocent and the innocent pair's team mates have obtained a favourable result on the board. In such case the Director should award to the innocent team: in match-point play, the match-point; in total-point play, the points it would probably have won if the irregularity had not occurred.

Procedure When Cards in a Board Become Interchanged

116. If it is ascertained that the cards or hands in a board became interchanged during a session, the Director determines as closely as possible which scores were made on the board as originally dealt, and which after the change. He divides the scores on that basis into two groups, and rates each group separately as provided in the two succeeding sections.

117. In pair or individual events, each score receives the match-points allotted to it under section 100 plus $\frac{1}{2}$ match-point for each score in the other group. The Director may adjust the scores by another method, when empowered to do so by specific regulations; but in any session, whatever method he first uses in scoring a board in which the cards became interchanged, he must use the same method to score every other such board in the same session.

118. In match-point team events, the Director determines in which cases both scores of the given teams were made with the identical deal. Such scores stand as played. In all other cases, reference is made to the pair match-points calculated as provided in section 100, and:

(a) If both pairs of a team are above average in pair match-points, or if one is above and the other exactly average, that team is awarded one match-point.

(b) If one pair is above and one below average, or if both pairs are exactly average, that team is awarded $\frac{1}{2}$ match-point.

(c) If both pairs are below average, or one exactly average and one below, that team is awarded no match-point.

119. In aggregate team play between two teams the board is redealt and replayed by both pairs of both teams; and the first results on it are void.

Discretionary Powers

120. Where the Director's procedure is not clearly defined by law, and particularly where he is given discretionary power as to the assessment of penalty points, or as to the magnitude of a penalty, he should follow these general principles:

(a) Wherever latitude is permitted under the law, penalty or redress should be appropriate in nature and degree to the offence.

(b) In doubtful cases, and particularly when the facts are in dispute, the original rights or most probable score of each side should be restored as closely as these can be determined.

(c) No contestant should be given a material advantage at the expense of another, unless the offence of the one is clearly established, and the other is in no way at fault.

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Penalties in Individual Events

121. In individual events, the Director shall enforce the '(penalty)' provisions of these laws and the provisions requiring the award of adjusted scores equally against both members of the offending side, even though but one of them is responsible for the irregularity. But the Director, in awarding adjusted scores, shall not assess penalty points against the offender's partner, if, in the Director's opinion, he is in no wise responsible for the violation.

Disciplinary Penalties

122. The Director, in addition to enforcing the '(penalty)' provisions of these laws and the provisions requiring the award of an adjusted score, should also assess penalty points for any offence which unduly delays or obstructs the game, inconveniences other contestants, violates correct procedure, or requires the award of adjusted scores. The following minimum penalty match-points should be assessed in match-point play for pairs or individuals, and equivalent penalty points in team or aggregate play, and the Director may increase them for flagrant or repeated violations:

(a) For undue delay which inconveniences other players: 1 penalty match-point.

(b) For comparing scores with another contestant during a session: 2 penalty match-points.

(c) For discussion of the bidding, play, or result of a board, which may be overheard at another table: 1 penalty match-point.

(d) For an error in procedure (such as failure to count cards, playing the wrong board, etc.) which requires an adjusted score for any contestant: penalty match-points equivalent to 10 per cent of the match-points possible for one contestant on that board. If a non-offending contestant is required to take an adjusted score through no fault or choice of his own, such contestant should be awarded an indemnity equivalent to 10 per cent of the match-points possible for one contestant on that board.

(e) For tardiness: after the first five minutes, 2 penalty match-points for each succeeding five minutes or fraction thereof. The tardiness penalty may be waived for the first session of an event, if the entries are still open.

(f) For failure to comply promptly with tournament regulations, or with any instruction of the Director: 2 penalty match-points.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

(g) For an improper or discourteous remark which may offend other contestants: 1 to 5 penalty match-points.

Suspension and Disqualification of Players

123. In performing his duty to maintain order and discipline, the Director is specifically empowered to:

(a) Suspend a player for the current session or any part thereof. (The Director's decision under this clause is final.)

(b) Disqualify a player, pair or team for cause, subject to approval by the Tournament Committee or Sponsoring Organization.

Part IX

APPEALS

124. A player may appeal for a review of any ruling made by the Director or by one of his assistants, provided that the appeal is made within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the session. The appeal shall not be heard unless both members of a pair (except in an individual contest) or a majority of a team concur in appealing. An absent member shall be deemed to concur.

125. All appeals must be made through the Director. If, in the Director's opinion, a player has insufficient grounds for the appeal, he should so advise him; and, if he still persists in the appeal, the Tournament Committee may assess a disciplinary penalty if it finds the appeal groundless.

126. If there is a Tournament Committee, the Director shall refer to it, subject to section 127 (b), to hear and decide such part of an appeal as involves questions of fact or the exercise of his discretionary powers. The Tournament Committee may not overrule him on a point of law but may appeal his decision on one (provided it does so promptly) to the national authority.

127. The Director shall hear and decide:

(a) Any part of a player's appeal dealing with a question of law; and

(b) Questions of fact or of exercise of his discretionary powers, but only if there is no Tournament Committee, or if it cannot meet without disturbing the orderly progress of the tournament. The Director may reverse any previous decision made by him or any of his assistants. A player may appeal (provided he does so promptly) to the national authority from the Director's decision on a point of law made following a hearing held either by the Director or by the Tournament Committee.

128. When the Tournament Committee or the Director hears

LAW OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

an appeal, the facts shall be determined first, but one witness should be heard at a time and all persons except the Committee, the Director and the testifying witness should be excluded from the hearing. When the Tournament Committee hears an appeal, it must accept as final the Director's statement as to anything said or done in his presence.

129. A Tournament Committee or national authority shall be the sole judge of its own quorum and the eligibility of its members, but no person should participate in deciding an appeal if he, or his partner or team mate in the event in question, is an interested party.

130. When practicable, an appeal to the national authority shall be heard and decided verbally at the site of the tournament. Otherwise, the Director shall promptly forward it to the national authority, together with a written statement of the facts as found by the Tournament Committee or by the Director, as the case may be, an expression of his views on the legal aspects of the case, and such supplemental written statement as the appellants may desire to make. Decisions of the national authority shall not alter the rank of contestants in an event unless it is so expressly provided in the decision.

REGULATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

Relation Between Tournament Committee and Tournament Director

131. The Tournament Committee has jurisdiction over advance arrangements for the tournament; the Tournament Director has jurisdiction over technical procedure. The Tournament Committee may instruct the Director regarding the manner in which it wishes games conducted, provided such instructions are given sufficiently in advance to allow for proper arrangements, and tournament regulations. In case of conflict, published regulations supersede recommendations by the Committee, and the Director must inform them accordingly. The Tournament Committee's authority with respect to conditions of play ceases 24 hours before beginning of play. Thereafter, the Director's decisions regarding technical procedure are final.

Qualifying Sessions

132. In events of two or more sessions, one or more of them may be designated as qualifying sessions, to select contestants eligible

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for continued play in the remaining sessions. In such case, the Director should announce, before conclusion of the first qualifying session: the number of contestants to be qualified; the method by which they will be selected; and the extent (if any) to which qualifying scores will count in the final standing.

Alternates

133. After the announced number of qualifying contestants are selected, all other contestants rank as alternates. When the qualifiers are selected from the field at large, alternates rank in order of their qualifying scores. When the original contestants are divided into several groups with a specified number to be qualified from each, the first vacancy in any group is filled by the next ranking contestant in that group. Subsequent vacancies are filled from the group or the field at large as the Tournament Organizers may decide.

134. If a contestant cannot play in a session for which he is qualified, or is not present when play is called, the Director seats the next ranking alternate. In a pair event, both partners must be present; otherwise, the pair forfeits its position and an alternate pair is seated.

135. An alternate ranks as a temporary substitute for the qualified contestant until the signal to start the second round of play is given. Thereafter, the alternate assumes full rights, and the contestant originally qualified may not reclaim his position.

Substitutes in Pair or Individual Events

136. If a player duly entered in an event is unable to play because of illness, urgent business, or other sufficient reasons, he or his partner may apply to the Director for permission to use a substitute. The Director may approve the substitute, subject to the limitations in the following section, if he considers that the reason is valid and that the rights of other contestants will not be jeopardized.

137. The number of sessions for which a player may have a substitute is limited by the following conditions:

(a) In a one-session event, a contestant having a substitute for more than 50 per cent of the boards is disqualified. If the substitute himself played 50 per cent or more of the boards, he acquires the rights of an original contestant.

(b) In an event of two or more sessions (but without elimination) a player having a substitute for more than one complete session is disqualified.

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(c) In an event with one qualifying session, a player is not eligible for the finals unless he has played in approximately one-third of the qualifying session.

(d) In an event with two or more qualifying sessions, a player may not have a substitute for more than one full qualifying session. However, a substitute may qualify in his own right if he has not missed more than one full qualifying session.

(e) No player may serve as a substitute if he has been previously entered in the event.

(f) Substitutions violating the above conditions, and all substitutions not approved by the Director, disqualify the original player, the substitute and (in a pair event) the partner.

(g) The Director may make emergency substitutions whenever necessary to the smooth operation of the game. If this results in disqualification of any contestant, the latter should be notified at the time the substitution is made.

Substitutes in Team Events

138. In team-of-four events, each team is entitled to have five members.¹ If only four members are registered at the time of the original entry, a fifth member may be registered later; but he may not be a player previously registered as a member of a different team. If a team has registered five members, but only four have played, the fifth member may be changed by notice to the Director. If all five members of the team have played, and a sixth member is required for a valid reason, the Director may designate a substitute; but the substitute may not be a player previously entered on a different team.

139. A team may designate which of its members will play in a given session, and in what partnership; but a change in players or partnerships during a session may be made only by permission of the Director.

PARTY CONTRACT BRIDGE

Duplicate for Home Play, and Competition Not in Duplicate

The forms of Duplicate play described in the Laws are readily adapted to home play. Special games suitable to a small number of tables, or emphasizing the social above the competitive element, are described in the following pages.

For a single table, the available games are Replay Duplicate and Pivot Bridge (non-Duplicate). For two or three tables there

¹ The organizers of a tournament may permit additional members.

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are Individual Games, and Mitchell or Howell Pair Games, and Team-of-Four Matches. For a larger number of tables, where it is desired to emphasize the social element, the popular game is Progressive Bridge, two forms of which are herein described.

Parts I to VI, inclusive, of the Duplicate Bridge Laws apply to all forms of Duplicate and multiple-table play—from the simplest Replay contest to the most elaborate championship tournament.

Even in simple home games, such as Replay Duplicate, it is advisable to appoint one participant as Supervisor and to clothe him with all the authority of a Tournament Director. Experience has shown that without a guiding hand even a social game is likely to be delayed or deadlocked by trivial irregularities.

Replay Duplicate

Replay Duplicate is a ~~contest~~ between two pairs. It is played in two sessions, called the Original Play and the Replay.

The players take places, one being designated North. The trays (boards) are shuffled, and are played with the arrows pointing North. Any number of trays is feasible.

A separate scoreslip is kept for each tray. At the close of the session the trays and scoreslips are laid aside ~~where~~ they will be undisturbed.

At some later time, the same four players take the same relative positions about the table. The trays are replayed with the arrows pointing East. Again a separate scoreslip is kept for each board.

The scoring may be by match points or aggregate points. If the former method is used, each deal is treated as a separate match. The pair having the better net score on a deal is credited with 1 point. The final scores are the totals of these match-points.

If aggregate-scoring is employed, the two slips for each deal are compared, and the pair having the greater plus or lesser minus is credited with the difference. The net scores for all deals, so determined, are totalled, and the pair having the larger total wins the difference.

Replay Duplicate is popular as a home game among foursomes that meet weekly for social bridge. It can easily be played in a continuous series of sessions. Half of the time in each session is devoted to the original play of new trays, and half to the replay of old trays.

The game tends to become a test of memory rather than of bridge skill. To check this tendency the following measures are recommended:

1. Do not play the trays in consecutive order. Choose the tray to be played next at random from the stack.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

2. Avoid comment of any sort about the deal after its original play.

3. Allow at least a week to elapse between the original play and the replay.

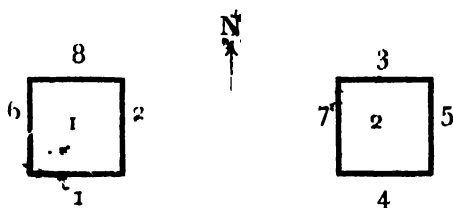
It is sometimes desired to make the game a test of skill in the play alone. The bidding during the original play is then recorded, and for the replay this bidding is read to fix the contract and declarer.

Individual Contests

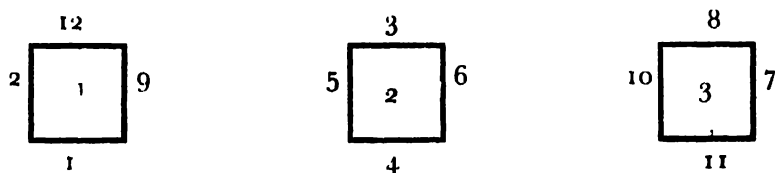
In an individual game, each player plays once with every other as partner, and twice against every other as opponent.

The initial seating of the players in games for two or three tables is shown below:

Two Tables



Three Tables



The game may be conducted without guide cards, thus:

1. Allow the players to take places at random. Reserve the North position at Table 1 for the Supervisor; this player is 'anchor', retaining his seat throughout the game.

2. From this schedule inform each player of his number, and tell him who is the player of next-lower number.

3. Announce that after each round, all players but the anchor will progress, each player taking the seat vacated by the player of next-lower number. (Player 1 follows Player 7 or 11, respectively.)

A new set of trays is played in each round. The set is played at all tables, the trays being circulated at convenience. The eight-player game requires seven rounds, with a total of 14, 21, or 28

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

boards. The twelve-player game requires eleven rounds, and the only feasible number of boards is 33

The scoring of individual contests is explained in the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge

Progressive Rubber Bridge

Progressive Rubber Bridge is a variation of the usual progressive game. It has proved increasingly popular, and may in time supplant the usual form. It follows the methods of progression and change of partners described in the preceding laws, but the scoring is somewhat different.

Under this arrangement it is preferable to play eight deals to a round, or to fix the length of a round by a definite time limit—say 30 minutes. If the length of a round is determined by a time limit, any deal which has been started before time is up may be completed, but no new hand may be dealt.

Rubber scoring is used. As many rubbers as possible are completed during the time allotted. A rubber completed in two games carries a bonus of 700 points. A three-game rubber carries a bonus of 500 points. If a side has won one game toward a rubber and the other side has not won a game, 300 points are allowed for the single game won. If one side only has a part-score (a trick-score totalling less than 100) in an unfinished game of an unfinished rubber, that side adds 50 points to its score.

Vulnerability is determined by the state of the score and not according to section 9 of the Progressive Code. A side is vulnerable when it has won a game and remains vulnerable until the conclusion of that rubber. However, vulnerability lapses at the conclusion of a round and a new rubber is started at the beginning of each new round.

At the end of a round each player enters on his tally only his net gain or loss—not his total score. At the end of the session these net gains and losses are totalled and the player's final score, plus or minus as the case may be, is entered at the bottom of his tally.

THE LAWS OF PROGRESSIVE BRIDGE

Arrangement of Tables

1 The game is played by two or more tables of four players each. The tables are numbered consecutively from Table No. 1 to the highest number.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

COMMENT

It is customary to provide each table with two packs of cards having different backs. The tables should be numbered conspicuously for the convenience of the players, and each one should be provided with one or more pencils and a score pad showing contract scoring.

Tally Cards

2. Prior to the beginning of play, the game director or committee prepares individual tally cards, one for each player. Each tally card bears a table number and designates a position (North, South, East or West) at the table.

The tally cards may be drawn at random by the players or assigned by the game director, as he prefers. When play is called, each player takes the position assigned by his tally card.

COMMENT

At mixed parties it is customary to arrange the tallies and seat assignments so that a gentleman will always have a lady as a partner and vice versa. This is accomplished by having tallies of two different kinds or colours, one for the ladies and the other for the gentlemen.

A Round

3. A round consists of four deals, one by each player. When all tables are through play, the game director gives a signal and the players move to their positions for the next round according to the type of progression used.

COMMENT

Each round should take about 20 minutes and the average session of play is from 6 to 7 rounds.

A Deal Passed Out

4. Only four hands are dealt at each table, one by each player. If a deal is passed out (that is, if all four players pass at their first opportunity to declare), the deal passes to the left and both sides score zero for that deal.

Method of Progression

5. At the conclusion of each round, the winning pair at Table No. 1 remain and the losing pair move to the last table. At all

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

tables except Table No. 1, the losers remain and the winners move up one table toward Table No. 1.

COMMENT

The above is the standard method of progression, but this may be waived or altered to suit the wishes of the game director or the players. Special tallies may be arranged or obtained, assigning positions for each round in such a way as to give each player as wide a variety of partners as possible. Another method is to have the ladies progress one way and the gentlemen the other way.

Selection of Partners

6. At mixed parties, it is customary but not essential for a gentleman to play with a lady partner, and vice versa. If the standard method of progression is used, the visiting lady at each table becomes the partner of the gentleman who remains.

If the players are all of the same sex, the four players at each table draw cards to determine partners at the start of each round. The two new arrivals at each table draw first, and the one drawing higher has choice of seats and is the first dealer; the one drawing lower sits at the left of the first dealer. The two players who remain at the table from the preceding round then draw, the higher becoming the partner of the dealer. Thus all players change partners after each round.

COMMENT

Since the chief function of progressive bridge is social, it is preferable to change partners at each round. However, if for some reason a pair contest is desired, the same partnerships may be retained throughout by simply progressing as described in Law No. 5 without changing partners at the next table. Another method is to have the original North-South pairs remain in the same positions throughout the game, and to have the East-West pairs progress one table at a time until they reach Table No. 1, and then go to the last table. In this case, the progression is followed automatically, regardless of which pair wins at each table.

Draw for Deal

7. Unless the dealer is already determined under Law No. 6, the four players at a table draw for first deal. The player who draws highest is the first dealer and may select either pack.

LAWs OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

Progressive Bridge Scoring

COMMENT

With the exceptions specifically mentioned below, the scoring for Progressive Bridge is exactly the same as for Duplicate Bridge and will be found explained in detail in Section 94 of the Duplicate Code. The most important points to remember about the scoring are:

Each deal is scored and recorded separately, and no trick points are carried over from one deal to the next.

Game is 100 points for tricks bid and made in one deal. The game premium is 300 points, if not vulnerable, and 500 points, if vulnerable, and it is allowed only when game is bid and made in one deal.

A premium of 50 points is scored for making any contract less than game. This premium is in addition to the value of the tricks made. Premiums for a small and grand slam are allowed only if bid for.

Scoring Limits

8. A side may not score more than 1,000 points in a single deal, except in the case of a slam contract fulfilled.

COMMENT

It is not correct to prohibit doubles or redoubles. The limitation of penalties avoids the necessity of this restriction.

Vulnerability

9. The first deal of each round shall be played and scored as if neither side were vulnerable.

The second and third deals of each round shall be played and scored as if the dealer's side were vulnerable and the other side not vulnerable.

The fourth deal of each round shall be played and scored as if both sides were vulnerable.

COMMENT

This is the most desirable method of determining vulnerability in Progressive Bridge, but if preferred all deals may be played as though neither side were vulnerable, or all deals as though both sides were vulnerable. In any event, the method should be announced before play starts.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

Recording the Score

10. One of the four players at each table is appointed to record the score. He enters the result of each deal on the score pad separately and, at the end of the round, totals all the points made by each side.

He enters on the individual tally of each player the points made by that player's side and also the points made by the opponents.

COMMENT

Correctly designed tallies provide spaces to record both 'My Score' and 'Opponents' Score'. It is important that both be entered on the tally, for otherwise the record would be meaningless.

Computing Total Scores

11. At the conclusion of the game, each player totals his score. He also totals the scores of his opponents, as recorded on his tally, and subtracts his opponents' total from his own. The difference, plus or minus as the case may be, is recorded in the space provided at the bottom of his tally.

COMMENT

Let us suppose that a player scores 2,460 points, and the opponents score 1,520 points against him. This makes his net score + 940 for the entire session. On the other hand, if a player scores only 1,650 points, and the opponents score 1,940 points against him, then his net score for the session is - 290 points. Do not make the mistake of recording only plus scores, for that method gives false results, and is likely to lead to improper doubling and redoubling.

Determining the Winner

12. The player with the largest plus score is the winner. Other players with plus scores rank in descending order followed by the players with minus scores, the one with the largest minus being last.

COMMENT

The method of awarding prizes is left to the discretion of the game director. At mixed parties it is usual to award one or more prizes to the highest ladies and one or more prizes to the highest gentlemen.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

THE LAWS OF PIVOT BRIDGE

Pivot Bridge is played by four (or five) players at a table. This form may be used for a single table or for large gatherings in which it is desirable to have each table play as a separate unit without progression by the players.

The game is so arranged that each player plays with each other player at his table both as partner and opponent. There are two methods of play: first, four deals may be played to a round, one deal by each player, and the players change partners at the end of each four deals; second, rubbers may be played, and the players change partners at the end of each rubber.

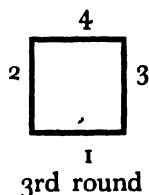
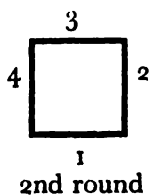
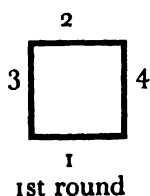
If four deals to a round are played, the scoring is exactly the same as in Progressive Bridge; if rubbers are played, the scoring is exactly the same as in Rubber Bridge. The laws given below explain only the method of rotation in changing partners; not scoring, vulnerability, etc., which are covered elsewhere.

Draw for Partners

1. The players draw cards for partners and deal and for a choice of seats and pack. The player who draws highest is the first pivot, and he deals first and has the choice of seats and packs. The player who draws second highest is the pivot's first partner; the player who draws third highest sits at the pivot's left during the first round; the player who draws fourth sits at the pivot's right; and if a fifth player is present, he does not participate in the first round or rubber.

Changing Partners (For Four Players)

2. During the first three rounds or rubbers, the players change positions as indicated in the following diagram:



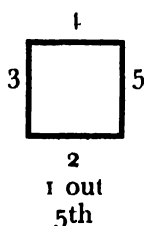
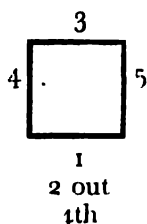
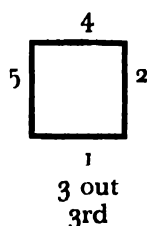
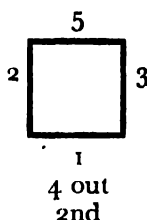
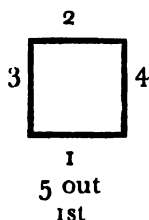
After the third round or rubber, the players again cut for position and partners.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE

Changing Partners (For Five Players)

3. If five players desire to play at the same table, they may be accommodated in this manner:

For the first round or rubber, the players take the positions indicated by their draw for position under Law No. 1. For rounds one to five, they take the positions indicated in the following diagram:



At the end of each five rounds, the players again draw for positions and partners.

COMMENT

This arrangement permits each player to play with each other player once as partner and twice as opponent, and each player sits out one round in turn.

Determining the Winner

4. At the completion of each round or rubber, the player enters on his tally both his own score and that of his opponents. Each player totals his own and his opponents' score separately and records the difference, plus or minus as the case may be, at the bottom of his tally. The player having the highest plus score is the winner and the others rank in descending order according to their scores.

THE INTERNATIONAL CODE

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge 1949

LAW 101.

The Scoring Scale officially approved by the European Bridge League is shown below.

Matches are considered to be drawn if in matches of 64 Boards or more the difference does not exceed 8 International Match-Points, and in matches of less than 64 Boards, one-eighth of the number of Boards played, with a minimum of 2 Match-Points.

In Multiple Team Matches a result is obtained by allocating 2 Victory Points for a win and 1 Victory Point to each Team for a draw.

EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

Scale of International Match-Points

| <i>Difference on Board</i> | <i>I.M.P.</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| 0 10 | 0 |
| 20 - 60 | 1 |
| 70 - 130 | 2 |
| 140 - 210 | 3 |
| 220 - 340 | 4 |
| 350 - 490 | 5 |
| 500 - 740 | 6 |
| 750 - 990 | 7 |
| 1,000 - 1,240 | 8 |
| 1,250 - 1,490 | 9 |
| 1,500 - 1,990 | 10 |
| 2,000 - 2,490 | 11 |
| 2,500 - 2,990 | 12 |
| 3,000 - 3,490 | 13 |
| 3,500 - 3,990 | 14 |
| 4,000 and over | 15 |